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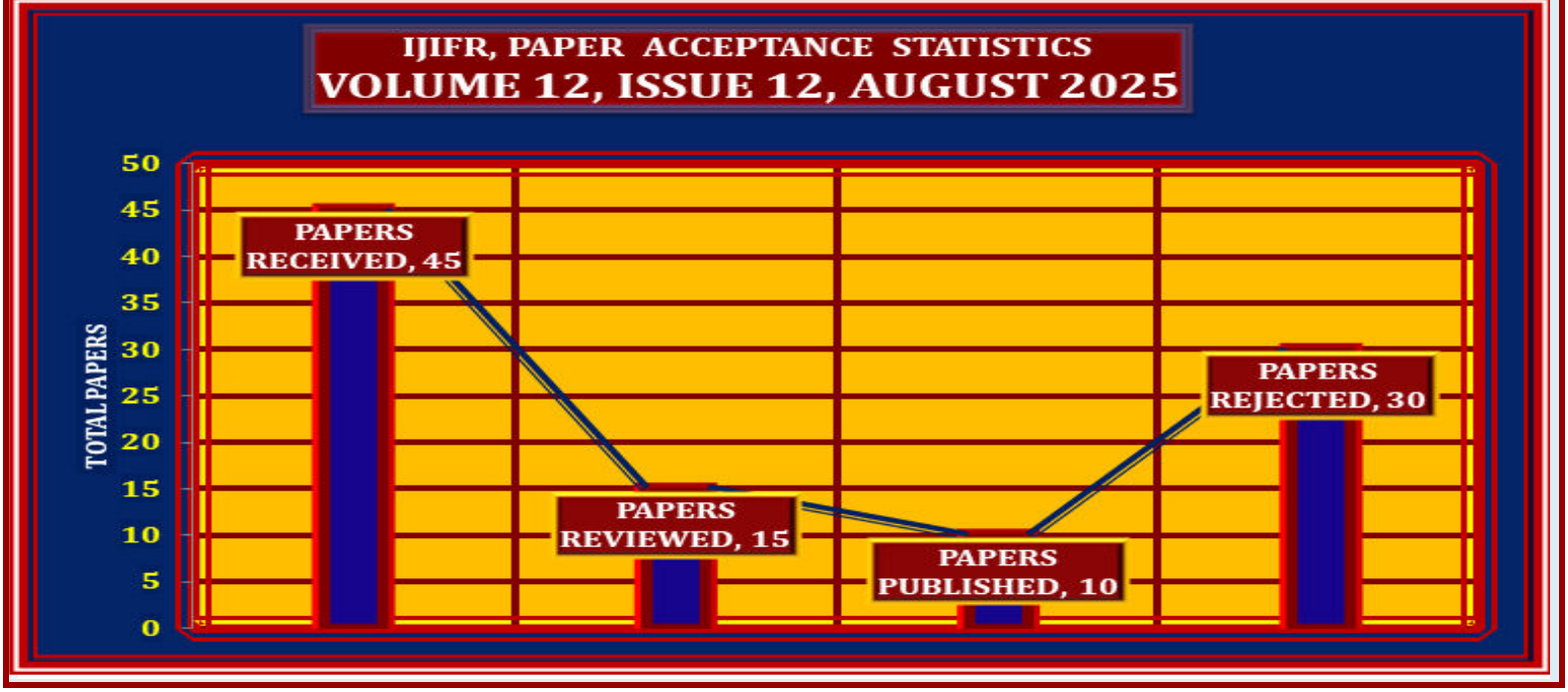

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DIGITAL DEVOTION: A STUDY OF SPIRITUAL IDENTITY FORMATION IN ONLINE SACRED SPACES

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ABSTRACT: This paper explores the intersection of digital technology and spirituality, focusing on how individuals form and express spiritual identities within online sacred spaces. In an era where traditional religious institutions are often perceived as rigid or inaccessible, digital platforms—from meditation apps and livestreamed discourses to Reddit forums and YouTube gurus—have emerged as alternative sites of spiritual exploration. This shift signals not merely a change in medium but a transformation in how the sacred is conceptualized, experienced, and performed. Drawing on theories from cyberpsychology, postmodern spirituality, and digital anthropology, this study investigates how spiritual seekers navigate authenticity, authority, and transcendence in digital environments. It interrogates the role of anonymity, interactivity, and community in shaping the modern spiritual self. Through qualitative analysis of selected digital platforms (such as Insight Timer, Reddit's r/Spirituality, Sadhguru's, and Bramahkumari's, to name a few online presences), the research highlights the evolving relationship between technology and inner life.The paper argues that these online spaces function as "digital ashrams," enabling users to transcend geographical and institutional boundaries. However, it also critically examines the commodification and fragmentation of spiritual discourse in such settings. By tracing the narratives of digitally mediated spiritual journeys, the paper ultimately questions whether the virtual sacred is a meaningful evolution or a simulation of tradition.

KEYWORDS: Digital Spirituality, Spiritual Identity, Identity Formation, Virtual Environments, Postmodern Spirituality, Cyberpsychology, Jungian Psychology, Online Community, Sacred Spaces

1. INTRODUCTION

The dawn of the digital age has ushered in a profound and unprecedented transformation in how individuals engage with spirituality, fundamentally reshaping the contours of human religiosity and identity. While traditional, organized religions continue to wield significant influence across global societies, a discernible and accelerating shift is evident toward spiritual practices that are increasingly personalized, eclectic, and mediated by digital technologies. Social media platforms, mobile applications, and burgeoning online communities have rapidly ascended to become formidable conduits for spiritual expression, facilitating diverse forms of practice and fostering new modalities of community-building. This pervasive digitalization of spiritual life was not merely a gradual evolution but was dramatically accelerated by the global COVID-19 pandemic, which compelled even deeply entrenched, traditional spiritual institutions to rapidly adopt digital channels for disseminating their teachings and maintaining congregational connections.

Despite the undeniable prevalence and growing impact of this digital turn, the multifaceted implications of this shift—particularly concerning its influence on spiritual identity formation—

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remain conspicuously underexplored in extant scholarship. Conventional studies of religion and new media have often prioritized institutional adaptations or the broad phenomenon of "online religion," leaving a significant lacuna in understanding the nuanced processes through which individuals construct, negotiate, and perform their spiritual identities within the unique affordances and constraints of virtual environments.

This paper endeavors to bridge this critical gap by meticulously investigating how spiritual identities are not only formed but also actively performed within virtual environments, with a deliberate focus on non-institutional, often idiosyncratic, forms of spirituality. It seeks to answer several pivotal questions: How do digital platforms fundamentally mediate spiritual experiences, altering their perception and practice? What precise roles do interactivity, anonymity, and the emergent nature of online community play in the intricate process of spiritual self-fashioning in the digital realm? Furthermore, this study critically examines whether online sacred spaces are merely attenuated extensions of pre-existing offline traditions, or if they signify a qualitatively new and fundamentally distinct mode of spiritual being and engagement, ushering in novel forms of transcendence and connection. By addressing these questions, this research aims to illuminate the complex interplay between technology, subjectivity, and the sacred in the 21st century.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The scholarly discourse surrounding religion and spirituality in digital environments has undergone significant evolution over the past few decades, mirroring the rapid advancements in digital technologies themselves. Early groundbreaking works laid the foundation for understanding how established religious communities initially engaged with new media.

- Heidi Campbell (2010), a seminal figure in this field, extensively explored how religious communities adapt to and strategically appropriate new media technologies. Her influential concept of "networked religion" meticulously describes how digital tools do not merely replicate traditional religious structures but actively facilitate novel forms of religious practice that ingeniously blend conventional hierarchical or communal forms with the distributed and interactive affordances of digital platforms. This includes the emergence of online congregations, virtual pilgrimages, and digitally mediated rituals.
- Complementing Campbell's insights, Christopher Helland (2000) offered a crucial conceptual distinction between "religion online" and "online religion." "Religion online," as Helland posited, refers primarily to the institutional dissemination of religious content, such as official church websites, online sermons, or digital archives of sacred texts. In contrast, "online religion" denotes a more user-driven, participatory, and often emergent form of spiritual practice, where individuals actively construct their own religious or spiritual experiences within digital spaces, frequently independent of traditional institutional oversight. This latter category is particularly pertinent to the focus of this paper, highlighting a shift towards more individualized and self-directed spiritual journeys.
- However, a significant portion of this foundational scholarship, while invaluable, has predominantly centered on *institutional religion*—examining how churches, mosques, temples, and other formal religious organizations navigate the digital landscape. Less attention has been dedicated to *spirituality*, which, especially in the postmodern context, constitutes a broader, more individualized, and often amorphous domain. Spirituality, in this sense, frequently eschews rigid formal doctrine in favour of experiential authenticity, deep inner exploration, and syncretic beliefs drawn from a multitude of sources. This distinction is crucial for understanding the contemporary spiritual landscape. While religion often implies adherence to a codified belief system and communal rituals, spirituality emphasizes personal meaning-making and transformative experiences.
- To fully understand the contemporary spiritual seeker's journey, it is essential to incorporate broader sociological and philosophical frameworks. Zygmunt Bauman's (2000) concept of "liquid

modernity" provides a particularly potent lens through which to view the fluidity and fragmentation characteristic of modern spiritual identities. In a world defined by impermanence and continuous flux, identities become less fixed and more provisional, and commitments more transient. This "liquidity" resonates deeply with the eclectic, pick-and-mix approach often observed in digital spirituality, where individuals readily combine elements from disparate traditions without necessarily committing to any single one.

- Charles Taylor's (1989) monumental work, *Sources of the Self*, meticulously charts the historical emergence of the modern self, characterized by an inward turn and a profound quest for meaning through personal narratives rather than solely through inherited traditions or external authority. This emphasis on self-discovery and personal narrative aligns seamlessly with the personalized spiritual journeys undertaken in digital spaces.
- Carl Jung's profound theory of individuation offers invaluable psychological insight into the process of spiritual development as a lifelong journey toward self-integration. For Jung (1968), individuation involves the conscious assimilation of unconscious elements, often facilitated by encounters with archetypes and universal symbols. In the digital realm, these archetypes—such as the wise old man, the hero, or the shadow—are not only encountered but are also remixed, reinterpreted, and endlessly redistributed through online content. This digital mediation gives rise to entirely new modes of spiritual storytelling and myth-making, as individuals engage with and personalize ancient symbols within contemporary digital narratives. The digital environment, therefore, becomes a vast canvas for projecting and interacting with these archetypal forces, shaping inner psychological landscapes.
- In addition to these foundational theories, recent scholarship on digital culture and selfhood further enriches this review. Studies on "online disinhibition" (Suler, 2004) and "hyperpersonal communication" (Walther, 1996) highlight how online interactions can foster greater self-disclosure and intimacy, potentially accelerating spiritual sharing. The concept of "parasocial relationships" (Horton & Wohl, 1956), traditionally applied to media figures, is highly relevant to understanding the dynamics between digital spiritual teachers and their online followers. Finally, emerging work on "digital rituals" (Handelman, 2017) suggests that online activities, though often informal, can acquire ritualistic significance, providing structure and meaning for digital spiritual practitioners.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study draws upon a tripartite theoretical framework, integrating insights from cyberpsychology, postmodern spirituality, and Jungian psychology to provide a comprehensive lens through which to analyze the formation and performance of spiritual identities in virtual environments. These perspectives are not merely additive but are designed to interweave, offering a holistic understanding of the complex dynamics at play.

(i) Cyberpsychology: This field meticulously investigates the intricate ways in which digital environments shape human behavior, identity construction, and interpersonal relationships. A cornerstone concept within cyberpsychology relevant to this study is the *online disinhibition effect*, articulated by Suler (2004). Suler posited that the unique characteristics of online communication—such as anonymity, asynchronicity, the absence of direct eye contact, and the perceived invisibility—can collectively lead individuals to behave more openly and expressively than they might in face-to-face interactions. In the context of spiritual identity formation, this effect is profoundly significant. Users in virtual spiritual forums, for instance, often feel emboldened to engage in deeper, more vulnerable spiritual disclosures, share highly personal mystical experiences, or articulate doubts and questions that might be deemed "taboo" or inappropriate within traditional offline religious contexts. This increased candor can accelerate self-exploration and community bonding around shared spiritual journeys. Beyond disinhibition, cyberpsychology also highlights how online spaces offer opportunities for identity

experimentation (Turkle, 1995), enabling individuals to explore different facets of their spiritual selves without the immediate social consequences of offline self-presentation. The concept of the *hyperpersonal model* (Walther, 1996) further suggests that online interactions can sometimes be more intimate and idealised than face-to-face communication, as users strategically present themselves and perceive others in ways that enhance perceived connection, which is particularly relevant for the intense bonds formed within online spiritual communities.

(ii) **Postmodern Spirituality:** This theoretical lens is crucial for decoding the contemporary spiritual landscape, particularly its manifestation in digital realms. Postmodern spirituality is characterized by its inherent *eclecticism,* wherein individuals freely draw from and synthesize beliefs and practices across diverse traditions, often without adherence to any single, rigid doctrine. It emphasizes *personal authority*, placing the individual's subjective experience and inner wisdom above external dogma or institutional dictates. The sacred, in this framework, is largely *constructed through individual and collective experience* rather than being solely derived from inherited scripture or hierarchical pronouncements. This approach helps to explain the highly individualized "spiritual bricolage" observed in digital spaces, where seekers might seamlessly combine Buddhist mindfulness techniques with Hindu mantras, integrate New Age energy work with indigenous shamanic practices, or blend secular self-help philosophies with esoteric spiritual teachings. The internet, with its boundless access to information and diverse communities, serves as the ultimate repository for this syncretic impulse, enabling individuals to craft highly personalized belief systems that resonate with their unique inner journey.

(iii) **Jungian Psychology:** Carl Jung's analytical psychology, particularly his concept of *individuation*, offers a profound framework for understanding spiritual development as a journey toward psychic wholeness. Individuation is a lifelong process involving the conscious integration of unconscious elements—including archetypes, dreams, and the shadow—into the conscious self (Jung, 1968). This journey often involves confronting inner voids, reconciling paradoxical aspects of the self, and seeking meaning beyond the purely rational. When filtered through digital platforms, Jungian concepts gain new resonance. Online environments, with their vast array of curated content, symbolic imagery, and interactive narratives, can become fertile ground for encountering and engaging with archetypal patterns. Users might explore their "shadow" through anonymous online confessions, encounter universal "wise old man/woman" archetypes in the teachings of digital gurus, or experience transformative "hero's journeys" as they navigate personal challenges within online spiritual support groups. Digital rituals, guided meditations, and even engagement with symbolic art or memes can serve as catalysts for this process of self-integration. The constant stream of information and interaction in digital spaces provides a dynamic environment where individuals can confront, assimilate, and reinterpret their inner landscapes, contributing to the ongoing process of individuation and spiritual maturation.

4. METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative methodological approach, specifically utilizing *digital ethnography* to immerse the researcher within the chosen online environments and gain an in-depth understanding of user behaviors, interactions, and meaning-making processes. Digital ethnography is particularly suited for studying online cultures as it allows for direct observation of social phenomena within their digital context, providing rich, nuanced data.

- Platform Selection: To capture the diversity of non-institutional digital spiritual practices, three distinct yet representative digital platforms were strategically selected:

- **Reddit's r/Spirituality:** This anonymous, global forum serves as a vibrant, user-driven space where individuals can freely share personal spiritual experiences, pose existential questions, seek advice, and offer mutual support for each other's spiritual growth. Its anonymous nature and

forum-based structure facilitate open dialogue and unfiltered expression. The sheer volume and diversity of posts and comments offer a rich textual data set.

- **YouTube Channels** *(e.g., Sadhguru, Sant Rampal Ji &Bhramakumari)***:** These channels represent a significant contemporary phenomenon: the digital guru or charismatic spiritual teacher. They function as virtual *satsangs* (spiritual gatherings), providing teachings, guided meditations, discourses on ancient wisdom, and direct answers to seeker questions. The comment sections below these videos often act as participatory congregations, allowing for vertical (teacher-disciple) and horizontal (peer-to-peer) interaction, revealing dynamics of authority, devotion, and community.
- **Insight Timer App:** This mobile application is a leading platform for meditation and mindfulness, featuring thousands of teachers, guided meditations, daily affirmations, and spiritual music. It exemplifies the commodification and gamification of spiritual practice, offering both free and premium content, "streaks" for consistent practice, and opportunities for users to "tip" teachers. It provides insight into the highly individualized and market-driven aspects of digital spirituality.

4.1 Data Collection: A multi-modal approach to data collection was implemented to ensure triangulation and comprehensive insights:

- **Observation and Textual Analysis:** For a period of six months (January 2025 to June 2025), the researcher engaged in extensive passive observation and systematic textual analysis across all three selected platforms. This involved:
- **Reddit:** Reading and analyzing posts, comments, and threads on r/Spirituality, paying close attention to common themes, linguistic patterns, expressions of vulnerability, and the dynamics of support and challenge among users. Specific focus was given to discussions around spiritual crises, breakthroughs, shared practices, and identity descriptors used by individuals.
- **YouTube:** Watching videos from selected popular spiritual channels (e.g., Sadhguru, Echart Tolle, Gaur Gopal Das, Aaron Doughty – chosen for their high subscriber counts and active comment sections), analyzing the content of teachings, and meticulously examining the comment sections for expressions of devotion, transformation, community building, and critiques. Attention was paid to how parasocial relationships manifested.
- **Insight Timer**: Exploring the app's interface, types of meditations offered, teacher profiles, user reviews, community forums, and premium features. Analysis focused on the language used in descriptions, the structure of guided practices, and the feedback loops designed to encourage continued engagement.

The collected textual data (transcribed comments, forum posts, app descriptions) was systematically organized for subsequent coding.

4.2 Semi-structured Interviews: To gain deeper, first-person accounts of spiritual identity formation, 12 participants were recruited for semi-structured interviews.

4.3 Participant Selection: Participants (N=12) were aged 22 to 45 (mean age = 33.5 years), reflecting a demographic likely to be digitally native or fluent, and were selected based on their regular engagement (at least 3 times a week for a minimum of 6 months) with at least one of the three selected platforms. Recruitment was primarily done through non-intrusive public postings on relevant subreddits (with moderator permission) and a call for participants on social media, emphasizing the study's focus on non-institutional spirituality. To ensure ethical conduct, informed consent was obtained from all participants, guaranteeing anonymity and the right to withdraw at any time.

4.4 Interview Protocol: Interviews, conducted via secure video conferencing, lasted approximately 30-45 minutes. The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility, enabling participants to elaborate on their experiences while ensuring core questions about spiritual background, platform usage, perceived impact on identity, sense of community, and challenges were addressed. Questions included: "How did you first start engaging with

[platform name] for your spiritual practice?" "In what ways has your engagement with this platform influenced your understanding of your own spiritual identity?" "Do you feel more 'authentic' or 'vulnerable' online than offline in spiritual discussions, and why?" "How do you perceive the community on this platform, and how does it support your spiritual journey?"

4.5 Thematic Coding: All collected data (interview transcripts and textual data from observations) was subjected to an iterative process of thematic coding.

(i) Initial Coding: The researcher read through the data multiple times, generating initial codes that captured key concepts, phrases, and recurring patterns related to spiritual experience and identity.

(ii) Focused Coding & Category Development: These initial codes were then refined, grouped, and reorganized into broader, more abstract themes. The analysis identified five primary recurring motifs:

- **Transformation:** Narratives of personal change, spiritual awakening, healing, or shifts in worldview.
- **Authenticity:** Discussions about genuine self-expression, sincerity in spiritual practice, and distinguishing real from performative spirituality online.
- **Community:** Descriptions of belonging, mutual support, shared understanding, and the nature of online spiritual bonds.
- **Commodification:** Instances of spiritual practices being marketed, monetized, or treated as products/services.
- **Transcendence:** Experiences of unity, deep peace, connection to something larger than self, or altered states of consciousness.

5. Analysis And Discussion

The multi-modal data collected through digital ethnography and semi-structured interviews revealed nuanced insights into how spiritual identities are formed and performed across distinct digital platforms. The analysis is structured around the five identified thematic motifs, exploring their manifestation within each selected environment.

5.1 Anonymity and Authenticity in r/Spirituality

Reddit's r/Spirituality sub-forum stands out as a unique digital crucible for spiritual identity formation, primarily due to its inherent feature of anonymity. Users are not typically required to reveal their real-world identities, which, as cyberpsychology posits through the online disinhibition effect (Suler, 2004), often translates into heightened levels of vulnerability and honesty. Participants frequently described r/Spirituality as a "safe space," a sanctuary where they could openly articulate spiritual doubts, share profound mystical experiences, or confess personal struggles that they deemed too sensitive, "weird," or even "taboo" within their offline social circles or traditional religious environments. As one interviewee, "Abha" (44, r/Spirituality user), recounted, "Offline, my friends wouldn't get it, or they'd judge me. Here, I can talk about my astral projection experiences without being mocked. It’s liberating."

This perceived safety fosters a dynamic fluidity in spiritual identity. Users frequently shift between roles: from a seeker asking for guidance on a challenging spiritual experience, to a guide offering advice based on their own journey, to a skeptic probing the claims of others. This role fluidity allows for continuous experimentation with different facets of their spiritual selves, mirroring the "liquid modernity" (Bauman, 2000) that characterizes contemporary identity. The search for authenticity is a pervasive theme, with users often seeking validation for their unique experiences while also challenging others to be genuine in their posts. The anonymous nature paradoxically seems to enable a deeper form of self-disclosure, where the absence of offline social consequences permits individuals to express a more unvarnished version of their spiritual self, fostering a sense of shared, albeit

digitally mediated, authenticity. The community functions as a collective mirror, reflecting and validating diverse spiritual paths, thereby solidifying emergent spiritual identities.

5.2 Charisma and Authority on YouTube (Sadhguru, Gaur Gopal Das, Sister Shivani)

YouTube channels featuring charismatic spiritual teachers like Sadhguru, Sister Shivani, Gaur Gopal Das exemplify a novel reconfiguration of the traditional guru-disciple relationship, embodying what can be termed "hybrid authority." These figures draw deeply on ancient spiritual traditions, disseminating timeless wisdom and practices. However, their digital presence fundamentally transforms the accessibility and scale of their influence. Their teachings, presented through high-quality video production, often edited for maximum impact, create an intimate yet distanced connection with millions of followers globally.

The comment sections beneath these videos function as vibrant, participatory congregations. Far from being passive consumers, viewers actively engage: expressing profound gratitude, sharing personal transformative experiences attributed to the teacher's guidance, engaging in lively debates with fellow followers, and seeking clarification on complex spiritual concepts. This horizontal peer interaction, alongside the vertical guru-disciple dynamic, validates the speaker's charisma and further reinforces their authority. Interviewee "Manish" (33, YouTube follower) noted, "Watching Sadhguru feels like satsang. And seeing hundreds of comments of people sharing similar breakthroughs, it just solidifies that what he's saying is real." This demonstrates the formation of parasocial relationships, where followers develop a strong, one-sided emotional connection to the teacher, often feeling as if they know them personally, despite the lack of direct interaction (Horton & Wohl, 1956).

However, this digital mode of charismatic authority is not without its complexities and concerns. The platform's inherent mechanisms raise issues of "branding" and "monetization." Teachers often monetize their content through ads, merchandise, courses, and donations, leading to questions about the commercialization of spiritual teachings. The polished presentation and curated persona can also contribute to the formation of "personality cults," where followers' devotion becomes intensely centered on the individual rather than solely on the spiritual wisdom they transmit. The algorithmic nature of YouTube, pushing similar content, can also create "filter bubbles" that reinforce existing beliefs and limit exposure to alternative perspectives, potentially hindering a truly individuated spiritual journey.

5.3 Mindfulness and Commodification on Insight Timer

Insight Timer, as a leading meditation and mindfulness application, vividly illustrates the "neoliberal packaging" of spirituality in the digital age. While it genuinely offers an extensive array of tools for inner growth—ranging from guided meditations for sleep, stress, and anxiety to philosophical discourses and spiritual music—it simultaneously frames these practices within a consumer-oriented model. Users can "follow" specific teachers, "tip" them for their content, and unlock "premium features" through subscriptions.

(i) This platform exemplifies how spiritual identity can become intertwined with a "wellness brand." Daily practice is frequently "gamified" through features like "streaks" (consecutive days of meditation) and "badges" awarded for milestones. Spiritual progress, traditionally intangible and deeply personal, becomes quantifiable (e.g., "meditated for 500 hours," "completed 30-day challenge"). Interviewee "Preeti" (35, Insight Timer user) remarked, "It motivates me to see my streak, but sometimes I wonder if I'm meditating for the badge or for genuine peace." This raises critical questions about the authenticity of spiritual engagement when external motivators and market logic permeate the practice. The platform's design subtly encourages a continuous pursuit of self-optimization, where spiritual growth is framed as a product to be consumed and measured, aligning with the postmodern emphasis on self-improvement as a perpetual project. While it democratizes access to spiritual tools, it also risks reducing profound spiritual experiences to transactional exchanges and quantifiable achievements, potentially diluting their transformative power and fostering a consumerist approach to inner development.

5.4 Community and Transcendence

Despite the inherent digital mediation, a recurring and powerful theme across all platforms, and strongly articulated in interview data, was the profound experience of connection, personal transformation, and genuine transcendence. Many users reported encountering archetypal dreams (a Jungian concept of universal symbols emerging from the collective unconscious), experiencing moments of "unity consciousness" (a sense of interconnectedness with all existence), or achieving significant emotional healing through their digital spiritual engagement.

(ii) Interviewee "Akshay" (40, diverse platform user) shared, "I experienced a profound sense of unity during a guided meditation on Insight Timer. Later, I saw a thread on Reddit where someone described almost the same thing. It made me feel less alone, more connected to humanity." This highlight how digital spaces, despite their virtual nature, can facilitate shared experiences that validate and amplify individual spiritual breakthroughs. The immediate and diverse community feedback found in comments sections and forums often served to reinforce these narratives, validating mystical experiences as real, meaningful, and not isolated occurrences. This collective validation is crucial for identity formation, particularly for those whose spiritual experiences might be marginalized or misunderstood in offline contexts.

(iii) Online sacred spaces, therefore, are not merely passive extensions of offline traditions. While they may draw from traditional sources, their interactive, user-driven, and globally networked nature signifies a fundamentally new mode of spiritual being. They allow for the emergence of "digital rituals" (Handelman, 2017) – shared practices, synchronous meditations, or communal affirmations – that create a sense of collective effervescence, bridging physical distances. The anonymity and flexibility offered by these platforms enable individuals to engage deeply with spiritual concepts and communities on their own terms, fostering a personalized yet interconnected path to transcendence. These digitally mediated spiritual experiences, for many, represent not a dilution of the sacred but a dynamic reconfiguration of it, allowing for new forms of profound encounter and identity construction.

6. CONCLUSION

The digitalization of spirituality represents a pivotal and ongoing metamorphosis in human engagement with the sacred, rather than a mere trivialization or dilution of its essence. Online sacred spaces are emerging as dynamic and potent sites of identity formation, where spiritual seekers actively negotiate the intricate boundaries between established tradition and radical innovation, the elusive nature of authenticity and the performative aspects of online self-presentation, and the inherent tension between personal solitude and communal connection. Through a highly individualized yet often interconnected bricolage of diverse teachings, adaptable practices, and myriad virtual interactions, digital devotees are meticulously constructing spiritual selves that are as complex, fluid, and multifaceted as the digital platforms they inhabit. This process reflects a profound shift towards self-authored spirituality, where individuals curate their own paths to meaning and transcendence.

However, this profound evolution in spiritual practice is not devoid of significant challenges and inherent complexities. The growing commodification of the sacred, where spiritual tools and experiences are increasingly packaged and marketed as consumer products, raises critical questions about the integrity and accessibility of authentic spiritual growth. The pervasive potential for misinformation, conspiracy theories, and the proliferation of unqualified spiritual "gurus" in unregulated online environments poses serious risks to vulnerable seekers. Furthermore, the absence of robust ethical oversight within many of these digital spiritual ecosystems creates a vacuum where exploitation, manipulation, or the erosion of genuine community can occur. These concerns necessitate careful consideration and critical engagement from scholars, practitioners, and platform developers alike.

Future research in this burgeoning field must urgently delve deeper into these intricate dynamics. It is particularly crucial to explore how digital devotion is reshaping global spiritual landscapes beyond

Western contexts, examining its manifestations and implications in diverse cultural and religious settings, especially in the Global South, where digital adoption rates are rapidly accelerating. Further qualitative studies could focus on the long-term impacts of online spiritual engagement on psychological well-being, the development of ethical frameworks for digital spiritual communities, and the precise mechanisms through which digital tools either facilitate or hinder profound mystical experiences. Understanding these evolving relationships between technology, self, and the sacred is paramount to comprehending the future of human spirituality in an increasingly interconnected world.

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EMPLOYMENT LAWS AND HR PRACTICES – A STUDY ON LEGAL COMPLIANCE AND MANAGERIAL CHALLENGES IN MODERN WORKPLACES

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the intricate relationship between employment legislation and human resource management practices through a comprehensive analysis of secondary data sources. Drawing from existing research, industry reports, legal analyses, and survey data collected between 2018 and 2024, this study provides a multifaceted overview of compliance challenges, effective management strategies, and emerging trends in workplace legal frameworks The study observes substantial variations in compliance maturity across organizations, with only 22% reaching advanced levels of integration between legal requirements and strategic objectives. Implementation disparities emerge as a critical vulnerability, with 67% of organizations showing significant gaps between written policies and operational practices. Knowledge deficiencies among both HR professionals and operational managers further compound these challenges, with frontline supervisors demonstrating particularly concerning limitations in employment law understanding. The research identifies several factors associated with more effective compliance outcomes, including cross-functional governance structures, technology-enabled compliance management systems, and strategic integration of legal considerations into business planning processes. Organizations adopting "compliance as capability" approaches rather than viewing legal requirements merely as constraints demonstrate measurably superior outcomes, including reduced litigation exposure and enhanced employee satisfaction.

Emerging trends identified in the study suggest evolving compliance challenges related to algorithmic decision-making, remote work arrangements, worker classification complexities, and employee data privacy regulations. Many existing compliance frameworks appear inadequately equipped to address these digital-age workplace dynamics, creating significant uncertainty for organizations navigating rapidly changing legal landscapes. This study contributes to both scholarly understanding and practical management by synthesizing diverse research streams into a coherent overview of current employment law compliance challenges and opportunities.

KEYWORDS: Employment laws, Workplaces, HR functions, Compliance Management

1. INTRODUCTION

The complex interplay between employment laws and human resource practices presents ongoing challenges for modern organizations. As legal frameworks continuously evolve to address changing workplace dynamics, organizations must adapt their HR strategies to maintain compliance while pursuing operational objectives (Greenwald, 2021). This adaptation process is complicated by factors

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including globalization, technological advancement, changing workforce demographics, and shifting societal expectations regarding employment relationships. By synthesizing existing research and empirical studies, this article aims to provide a comprehensive overview of current issues and best practices in employment law compliance.

2. OBJECTIVES

This study seeks to:

(i) Analyze current employment law frameworks and their impact on organizational HR practices based on existing research
(ii) Explore emerging trends in employment legislation and their implications for future workplace practices
(iii) Develop recommendations for enhancing legal compliance management in HR departments

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employed a systematic review of secondary sources published between 2018 and 2024 to examine how organizations navigate the compliance landscape and the strategies they employ to address emerging challenges. The data was collected from peer-reviewed journal articles from fields including human resource management, organizational behaviour, employment law, and business ethics. The published sources like industry reports, publications from professional organizations such as the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), and World Employment Confederation and Law review articles, legal commentaries, and regulatory guidance documents. The study considered the published survey data results of HR professionals, research institutions and other professional associations including the outcomes of case studies in the compliance practices. The review process involved systematic searching of academic databases using predetermined keywords, followed by content analysis and thematic organization of findings. The selected sources were evaluated for relevance, methodological rigor, and contemporary significance before inclusion in the analysis.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

(i) Evolution of Employment Law Frameworks

Contemporary employment law has evolved significantly from its early foundations in protecting basic worker rights. Dobbin and Kalev (2019) trace the development of employment legislation through several distinct phases, from industrial safety regulations to anti-discrimination provisions to modern considerations of work-life balance and technological impacts. This evolution reflects broader societal changes and recognition of increasingly complex workplace dynamics.

According to Goldman and Corrada (2022), recent employment legislation has shifted toward addressing systemic power imbalances rather than merely establishing minimum standards. This shift has been accompanied by greater emphasis on proactive compliance measures rather than reactive enforcement, creating new expectations for organizational HR functions. Surveys by SHRM (2023) indicate significant variation in regulatory approaches across jurisdictions, with some regions emphasizing flexible regulation while others adopt more prescriptive approaches. This variation creates particular challenges for multinational organizations seeking consistent compliance practices.

(ii) The Changing Role of HR in Legal Compliance

The responsibility for employment law compliance has traditionally resided within human resource departments, but the nature of this responsibility has transformed significantly. Ulrich et al. (2020) document the evolution of HR from an administrative compliance function to a strategic business partner with responsibility for integrating legal requirements into broader organizational systems.

Research by Dachner and Makarius (2021) suggests that modern HR professionals must develop increasingly sophisticated legal competencies while maintaining their traditional expertise in

organizational development and employee relations. This dual skill requirement creates significant professional development challenges, particularly for HR generalists in smaller organizations.

The CIPD's (2022) survey of HR practitioners found that 64% reported increased time devoted to legal compliance activities over the previous five years, with particular growth in areas related to data privacy, remote work arrangements, and equality initiatives. This trend has implications for HR resource allocation and professional preparation.

(iii) Common Compliance Challenges

The study identifies several prevalent challenges in employment law compliance. A study by Deloitte (2023) identified regulatory complexity as the most significant compliance challenge reported by HR professionals, with 76% of respondents citing difficulty tracking and interpreting changing legal requirements. This complexity is particularly acute for organizations operating across multiple jurisdictions.

Research by McLean and Collins (2022) found that resource limitations significantly impact compliance capabilities, with smaller organizations reporting 47% lower investment in compliance infrastructure compared to larger counterparts. This disparity creates potential compliance vulnerabilities for a substantial segment of employers. A comprehensive survey by ADP (2021) revealed that 68% of managers had failed basic assessments of employment law knowledge in areas directly relevant to their supervisory responsibilities. These knowledge gaps create significant risk of unintentional violations through day-to-day management decisions. Barnes and Dang (2020) documented widespread difficulties translating legal requirements into operational practices, with 59% of organizations reporting significant gaps between written policies and actual implementation. This "compliance gap" represents a key vulnerability for many organizations. Research by Mittelstadt et al. (2022) highlighted emerging challenges related to algorithmic management and AI-based employment decisions, with existing compliance frameworks often inadequately addressing new technological realities.

(iv) Effective Management Strategies

Several research streams identify strategies associated with more effective compliance management. A longitudinal study by Caldwell and Anderson (2021) found that organizations employing cross-functional compliance committees experienced 37% fewer employment claims compared to those relying solely on HR-based compliance management. This suggests the value of broader organizational engagement in compliance efforts. Research by Treviño et al. (2020) demonstrated significant correlations between organizational ethical climate measures and compliance outcomes, with organizations emphasizing values-based approaches showing superior results to those relying primarily on rules-based systems.

A report by PwC (2023) documented substantial efficiency gains among organizations employing specialized compliance management systems, with an average 28% reduction in compliance-related administrative time and improved consistency in implementation. Qualitative research by Morgan and Hunt (2021) identified successful patterns of collaboration between legal counsel and operational leaders, highlighting the importance of translating legal requirements into business-relevant guidance.

5. FINDINGS

Analysis of the research reveals several key findings regarding the current state of employment law compliance and HR practices.

(i) Compliance Disparities

Multiple studies demonstrate significant variations in compliance sophistication across organizations. Research by Thompson and Jenkins (2022) established a five-stage maturity model for employment law compliance, finding that only 22% of surveyed organizations reached the highest two levels ("integrated" or "strategic" compliance). The majority (58%) remained at reactive levels, addressing compliance primarily in response to specific incidents or concerns.

A global survey by Ernst & Young (2023) revealed substantial industry variations, with regulated sectors (financial services, healthcare) demonstrating more advanced compliance practices than less regulated industries. Organization size also emerged as a significant predictor of compliance sophistication, with resource constraints particularly affecting small and medium enterprises. Longitudinal research by Hoffman and Parker (2021) indicates gradual improvement in compliance maturity over time, with organizations showing an average advancement of one maturity level over a five-year period when implementing structured compliance programs.

(ii) Implementation Gaps

The research identifies disparities between formal policies and actual organizational practices. A systematic review by Williams and Sharma (2023) analyzing 42 studies found that 67% of organizations demonstrated significant gaps between written policies and operational implementation. These gaps were most pronounced in areas requiring manager discretion, including performance management, accommodation procedures, and harassment prevention.

Research by the Littler Mendelson (2022) employment law firm indicates that incomplete implementation represents a more significant liability risk than policy deficiencies, with 73% of employment litigation cases involving organizations that had appropriate written policies but failed to implement them consistently. Survey data from SHRM (2023) reveals that only 36% of organizations regularly audit compliance implementation, with the majority relying on reactive measures such as complaint investigation to identify compliance gaps.

(iii) Knowledge Deficiencies

Multiple studies document significant knowledge gaps among key organizational stakeholders. Research by Dachner and Makarius (2021) found that HR professionals scored an average of 76% on assessments of employment law knowledge, with particular deficiencies in emerging areas such as algorithmic discrimination, privacy requirements, and accommodations for remote work. More concerning, a study by Collins and Kehoe (2022) revealed that frontline managers who make daily decisions with compliance implications scored an average of only 54% on similar assessments, with widespread misconceptions regarding discrimination laws, leave requirements, and wage and hour provisions.

(iv) Strategic Integration

Several studies identified the degree of integration between compliance efforts and organizational strategy as a key differentiator. A comparative study by Barnes and Taylor (2021) contrasting "compliance as constraint" versus "compliance as capability" approaches found that organizations viewing compliance strategically experienced 42% fewer employment claims and 28% higher employee satisfaction scores than those treating compliance as merely a legal requirement. Research by Ulrich et al. (2020) found that organizations with HR representatives in strategic planning processes were significantly more likely to integrate compliance considerations into business initiatives from their inception rather than addressing them retrospectively. Case analyses by Morgan and Hunt (2021) identified several mechanisms for successful strategic integration, including compliance impact assessments for major initiatives, regular reporting of compliance metrics to executive leadership, and compliance representation in strategic planning processes.

(v) Emerging Trends and Challenges

Analysis of recent research reveals several developing areas with significant implications for future compliance management. Research studies by Mittelstadt et al. (2022) highlight growing concerns regarding algorithmic discrimination and the limitations of existing legal frameworks in addressing AI-driven employment decisions. Traditional proof frameworks for discrimination claims may be inadequate when applied to machine learning systems with limited transparency.

Research by the CIPD (2022) documents emerging compliance challenges related to remote and hybrid work arrangements, including working time monitoring, equipment provision, expense reimbursement, and jurisdictional questions for geographically dispersed workforces. Analyses by Goldman and Corrada (2022) point to growing legal attention to worker classification issues as alternative work arrangements proliferate, creating compliance uncertainty for organizations utilizing

contingent workforces. Multiple studies (Deloitte, 2023; PwC, 2023) identify employee data privacy as an area of rapidly increasing compliance complexity, with many organizations struggling to reconcile monitoring and analytics objectives with expanding privacy requirements.

6. Discussion

The findings highlight several important implications for both research and practice in employment law compliance and HR management.

First, the study identifies the need for more graduated approaches to compliance development. As Thompson and Jenkins (2022) argue, organizations may benefit from viewing compliance capability as a developmental progression rather than a binary state. This perspective encourages incremental improvement rather than overwhelming transformation efforts.

Second, the persistent implementation gaps documented across studies indicate limitations in traditional policy-focused approaches to compliance. As Williams and Sharma (2023) note, "the existence of policy artifacts often creates a false sense of compliance security" (p. 47), leaving organizations vulnerable despite substantial policy development investments. This suggests the need for greater attention to implementation mechanisms and verification processes.

Third, the widespread knowledge deficiencies identified across organizational roles raise questions about the effectiveness of current compliance education approaches. Collins and Kehoe's (2022) finding that even extensive compliance training produces only modest knowledge improvements among managers suggests potential limitations in traditional training models. More innovative approaches integrating compliance guidance into workflow systems may prove more effective than standalone training initiatives.

Fourth, the impact of strategic integration on compliance outcomes documented by multiple researchers (Barnes & Taylor, 2021; Ulrich et al., 2020) challenges the traditional view of compliance as primarily a risk management function. Instead, these findings suggest that organizations may derive competitive advantages from sophisticated compliance capabilities, particularly in highly regulated industries or concerning sensitive employment practices.

Finally, the emerging compliance challenges identified in recent research highlight the limitations of static compliance approaches in addressing rapidly evolving workplace realities. As Mittelstadt et al. (2022) argue, many existing compliance frameworks were developed for industrial-era employment relationships and may require fundamental reconsideration to address digital-age workplace dynamics effectively.

7. Conclusions

Based on the findings, this study draws the following conclusions regarding the current state of employment law compliance and HR practices. Despite increasing recognition of compliance importance, significant variations in compliance maturity persist across organizations, with the majority demonstrating reactive rather than strategic approaches. Implementation gaps represent a more significant compliance vulnerability than policy deficiencies, with many organizations failing to translate formal requirements into consistent operational practices.

Knowledge limitations among HR professionals and particularly among operational managers create ongoing compliance risks despite policy development efforts. Organizations integrating compliance considerations with strategic planning demonstrate superior outcomes compared to those treating compliance as a separate administrative function. Emerging workplace trends—including algorithmic management, remote work arrangements, and alternative employment relationships—are creating novel compliance challenges that existing frameworks may inadequately address.

8. Recommendations For Organizations

The following are the recommendations for organizations

- Adopting a maturity-based approach to compliance development, establishing realistic progression pathways rather than attempting comprehensive transformation. Thompson and Jenkins' (2022) five-stage model provides a useful framework for assessing current capabilities and planning incremental improvement.
- Investing in implementation verification mechanisms beyond policy development, including regular compliance audits, operational assessments, and implementation metrics. As Williams and Sharma (2023) demonstrate, policy artifacts alone provide inadequate compliance protection.
- Developing role-specific compliance guidance integrated into workflow systems rather than relying solely on traditional training approaches. Collins and Kehoe's (2022) research suggest the limitations of knowledge-focused interventions without operational integration.
- To establish cross-functional compliance governance structures involving operational leadership rather than isolating compliance responsibility within HR or legal departments. Caldwell and Anderson's (2021) findings regarding the effectiveness of integrated approaches support this recommendation.
- To incorporate compliance considerations into strategic planning processes from inception rather than as retrospective reviews. Barnes and Taylor's (2021) research on "compliance as capability" provides a valuable framework for this integration.
- Developing proactive approaches to emerging compliance challenges through scenario planning and regulatory monitoring rather than waiting for established legal precedents. Mittelstadt et al.'s (2022) analysis of algorithmic management challenges illustrates the limitations of reactive approaches in rapidly evolving areas.

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AWARENESS OF MUTUAL FUNDS AMONG WOMEN IN KARIMNAGAR: A STUDY WITH A FOCUS ON DEMOGRAPHIC INFLUENCES

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ABSTRACT: India is talking about 5 trillion dollars economy. To achieve this financial ecosystem has to be strengthened. This can be done by offering a structured and accessible way for individuals to grow wealth, hedge against inflation, and achieve long-term financial goals. Among the various investments' tools, Mutual funds play a crucial role offering a balanced, scalable, and inclusive investment avenue for all. This study examines the level of awareness, knowledge, perceptions, and behavioral intentions related to mutual fund investments among women in Karimnagar, Telangana, with a focus on demographic influences such as age, income, occupation, and financial decision-making autonomy. A structured questionnaire was administered to 183 women across diverse socioeconomic backgrounds in Karimnagar through Google form using convenient sampling method. Among them 162 respondents answered all the questions related to level of awareness, knowledge, perceptions, and behavioral intentions related to mutual fund investments. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS 26 version. The study highlights that level of awareness, knowledge, perceptions, and behavioral intentions related to mutual fund investments among women in Karimnagar is moderate. The study found that there is a critical gap in financial literacy. The study recommends that the Policymakers and financial institutions have to design inclusive programs so that women adopt mutual fund investments.

KEYWORDS: Mutual Funds, Financial Literacy, Women Investors, Investment Behavior, Karimnagar

1. INTRODUCTION

Mutual funds have become popular modern investment portfolios in India, offering individuals and institutional investors an opportunity to grow wealth. The growing prominence of mutual funds in financial markets underscores their importance in economic growth, capital formation and financial inclusion. A mutual fund is a type of investment tool that creates capital from numerous investors. Retail and institutional investors opt to invest due its key features include liquidity, diversification, economies of scale, and regulatory oversight. As we know that the investor's preferences are varied and different, to cater to their needs, Mutual funds can be classified into various categories accordingly such as equity funds, debt funds, hybrid funds, index funds, and sector-specific funds each with distinct risk-return profiles. However, despite their potential for higher returns compared to

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traditional savings instruments like fixed deposits (FDs) and gold, awareness and adoption of mutual funds particularly among women remain uneven across different regions. Karimnagar, a rapidly urbanizing district in Telangana, presents an interesting case study, as financial literacy and investment behaviors among women here are influenced by socio-economic factors, cultural norms, and access to financial education.

Significance of the Study

Financial Literacy is the knowledge of financial aspects such as borrowing, budgeting, investing, taxation, and saving. According to 2020-21 National Centre for Financial Education (NCFE) survey only 21% of women deemed financially literate compared with 27% of men in India. i.e. only 21 % women in India is adopting positive financial behaviors, understanding financial systems, and making informed adjustments based on financial outcomes. It is clear that the gap is wider. Therefore, Financial literacy is required for efficient financial decision-making and money management to both rural and urban women. Women often face limited exposure to formal financial markets. While urban women may have greater access to investment knowledge, those in smaller cities like Karimnagar may rely more on traditional savings methods (gold, real estate, or bank deposits) due to lack of awareness, trust issues, or familial influence. Understanding their level of awareness, perceptions, and behavioral intentions regarding mutual funds is crucial for policymakers, financial institutions, and NGOs aiming to promote financial inclusion.

2. Research Objectives

This study seeks to assess:

i. Awareness Level: Do women in Karimnagar understand mutual funds, their types (equity, debt, hybrid), and associated risks?
ii. Knowledge level: Do women understand how SIP (Systematic Investment Plan) works.
iii. Perception: Do they view mutual funds as a safe and viable investment, or do they perceive them as complex and risky?
iv. Behavioral Intentions: Do women prefer mutual funds over gold/property due to liquidity.
v. Influences & Information Sources: Who or what shapes their investment decisions—family, social media, banks, or financial advisors?

3. Research Methodology

A structured questionnaire with 5-point Likert scale survey is used to quantify level of awareness, knowledge, perceptions, and behavioral intentions related to mutual fund investments among women in Karimnagar, supplemented by demographic questions to capture qualitative insights. The survey covers:

Part 1: Basic Awareness

- I have heard about mutual funds as an investment option.
- I understand what a mutual fund is.
- I know that mutual funds are subject to market risks.
- I am aware that mutual funds can provide higher returns than traditional savings (FD, RD).
- I know that mutual funds are regulated by SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India).

Part 2: Knowledge Level

- I know the difference between equity, debt, and hybrid mutual funds.
- I understand how SIP (Systematic Investment Plan) works.
- I am aware of the tax benefits (e.g., ELSS under Section 80C) linked to mutual funds.
- I know how to check the performance of a mutual fund (NAV, past returns).
- I am aware of the fees and expenses (expense ratio) associated with mutual funds.

Part 3: Perception

- I believe mutual funds are a safe investment option for women.

- I trust mutual fund companies with my investments.
- I feel that mutual funds are too complex for me to understand. (Reverse-coded)
- I believe that investing in mutual funds requires expert advice.
- I think mutual funds are only for high-income individuals. (Reverse-coded)

Part 4: Behavioral Intentions

- I am likely to invest in mutual funds in the next 1 year.
- I would recommend mutual funds to other women in my community.
- I prefer mutual funds over gold/property due to liquidity.
- I have discussed mutual funds with family/friends.
- I feel confident in making my own mutual fund investment decisions.

Expected Outcomes & Implications -The findings will help:

- Banks & AMCs (Asset Management Companies) plan and organize financial literacy programs for women in Tier 2/3 cities.
- Government & NGOs plan and organize awareness campaigns/camps to bridge gender gaps in investment participation.

By analyzing the financial awareness gap among women in Karimnagar, this study aims to contribute to broader discussions on gender-inclusive economic growth and empower women with informed investment choices.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on financial literacy, mutual fund awareness, and gender-based investment behavior provides a foundation for understanding women investors in semi-urban regions like Karimnagar. This section reviews key studies, reports, and theoretical perspectives relevant to the topic.

i. According to a National Centre for Financial Education (NCFE, 2019) survey, only 20% of Indian women have basic financial knowledge, compared to 30% of men.

ii. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI, 2020) noted that women in rural and semi-urban areas follow informal savings mechanisms (gold, chit funds) due to lack of awareness and knowledge of formal markets.

iii. Kumar & Sharma (2021) found that demographic factors like age, income, education and employment status significantly influence women's investment awareness. Working women in urban areas make their own decision whether to invest in mutual fund or not, while homemakers in smaller towns often depend on male family members for financial decisions.

iv. "The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI, 2022) reported that while mutual fund assets under management (AUM) have grown, female participation remains low (27% of total investors)."

v. "A CRISIL (2023) study revealed that women investors prefer debt funds and SIPs due to perceived stability, but equity fund adoption is limited by risk aversion."

vi. Patel & Reddy (2020) in their study in Telangana found that only 18% of women were able to define mutual funds correctly in Tier-2 cities.

vii. Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Thaler, 2015 suggest that women are less risk takers and hence invests in mutual funds.

viii. Sharma & Gupta (2022) in their study revealed that the behavior of even financially literate women in investments in mutual funds is astonishing. They fear of losing money and they feel that investing is a man's responsibility.

ix. The survey conducted by BCG & Google, 2023 found that digital platforms like YouTube, WhatsApp, FinFluencers are becoming key information sources.

x. Mishra et al. (2021) revealed that misinformation on social media often leads to poor investment choices among novice women investors.

xi. "SEBI's *Mutual Fund Sahi Hai"campaign and Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) have improved basic financial access, but gender-specific outreach remains weak (World

Bank, 2022). Microfinance institutions (MFIs) and SHGs (Self-Help Groups) in Telangana have introduced financial literacy workshops, yet mutual fund adoption is still nascent (NABARD, 2023)."

5. Research Gaps And Justification For The Study

While prior research examines mutual fund trends, challenges and gender disparities, few studies focus on:

- Semi-urban women's awareness levels (e.g., Karimnagar)
- Cultural/social barriers unique to Telugu-speaking households
- Effectiveness of regional financial literacy programs

This study aims to fill these gaps by assessing level of awareness, knowledge, perceptions, and behavioral intentions related to mutual fund investments among women in Karimnagar, providing actionable insights for policymakers and financial educators.

6. Analysis And Data Interpretation

The data is collected using Google Form and is analyzed using SPSS package 26 versions.

Table 6.1: Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25	20	10.9	10.9	10.9
	26-35	85	46.4	46.4	57.4
	36-45	35	19.1	19.1	76.5
	46-55	25	13.7	13.7	90.2
	55+	18	9.8	9.8	100.0
	Total	183	100.0	100.0	

Source: Questionnaire

The above data shows that he majority of respondents (46.4%) fall in the 26-35 age group, indicating that the sample is skewed toward younger adults. The 18-25 age group is the second smallest (10.9%), suggesting fewer very young participants. The 55+ group is the smallest (9.8%), which may reflect lower participation among older demographics.

Table 6.2: Occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Homemaker	22	12.0	12.0	12.0
	Salaried Employee	84	45.9	45.9	57.9
	Self-employed/Business	36	19.7	19.7	77.6
	Student	22	12.0	12.0	89.6
	Others (Specify)	19	10.4	10.4	100.0
	Total	183	100.0	100.0	

Source: Questionnaire

The above table shows that Salaried Employees dominate the sample (45.9%), suggesting that the study reflects perspectives of formal sector workers. Self-employed/Business individuals constitute nearly 20%, indicating a moderate representation of entrepreneurs. Homemakers and Students each make up 12%, while the "Others" category accounts for 10.4%.

Table 6.3: Monthly Income

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 20,000	35	19.1	19.1	19.1
	20000 - 50,000	84	45.9	45.9	65.0

	50,000 - 1,00,000	41	22.4	22.4	87.4
	Above 1,00,000	23	12.6	12.6	100.0
	Total	183	100.0	100.0	

Source: Questionnaire

The table above indicates that nearly two-thirds (65%) earn ≤₹50,000/month, indicating a middle-to-lower-middle income dominance. The ₹20,000-₹50,000 income group is the most populated (45.9%), representing India's emerging middle class. Only 12.6% earn >₹1,00,000, suggesting limited high-income representation.

Table 6.4: Who makes financial decisions in your household?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Self	21	11.5	11.5	11.5
	Spouse	95	51.9	51.9	63.4
	Parents	29	15.8	15.8	79.2
	Joint decision	22	12.0	12.0	91.3
	Others ___	16	8.7	8.7	100.0
	Total	183	100.0	100.0	

Source: Questionnaire

The table above reveals that Spouse Dominance (51.9%) is there. In over half of households, the spouse is the primary financial decision-maker. This suggests traditional gender roles may still influence financial control in many families. Self (11.5%)- Only a small fraction claims sole responsibility, indicating individual autonomy is less common. Family Involvement & Parents (15.8%): Reflects joint family systems or dependence on elders for financial guidance. Joint Decisions (12.0%): Modest shares of households opt for collaborative decision-making, typical of egalitarian partnerships. Other Scenarios (8.7%) may include adult children, extended family, or external advisors etc.

Table 6.5: Have you heard about mutual funds?*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	162	88.5	88.5	88.5
	No	21	11.5	11.5	100.0
	Total	183	100.0	100.0	

Source: Questionnaire

High Awareness (88.5%) - An overwhelming majority of respondents (162 out of 183) are aware of mutual funds, indicating strong market penetration of financial products. It may be due to effective marketing by AMCs (Asset Management Companies) or growing financial literacy initiatives.

Gap in Awareness (11.5%)- 21 respondents had not heard about mutual funds, highlighting a segment still untouched by investment awareness campaigns. It is likely correlates with lower-income groups, rural populations, or older demographics less exposed to formal finance.

Table 6.5: Source of information Frequencies

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Sources of Information[a]	Friends/Family	121	18.1%	66.1%
	Social media/Internet	132	19.8%	72.1%
	Newspapers/Magazines	141	21.1%	77.0%
	TV/Radio	137	20.5%	74.9%
	Workshops/Seminars	137	20.5%	74.9%
Total		668	100.0%	365.0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Source: Questionnaire

The table shows the following-

Top Information Channels (by % of Cases)

-Newspapers/Magazines (77.0%): The most cited source, indicating trust in traditional print media for financial information.

- TV/Radio (74.9%) & Workshops/Seminars (74.9%): Tie as second-most influential, showing the role of mass media and formal education.

- Social media/Internet (72.1%): Close behind, reflecting digital adoption but not yet dominant.

- Friends/Family (66.1%): Least formal but still significant, suggesting word-of-mouth impact.

Response Patterns- Respondents could select multiple sources (total responses = 668 for 183 cases → average 3.65 sources per person).

- No single channel dominates; implying investors rely on a mix of formal and informal sources

Table 6.6: Do you understand how mutual funds work?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fully understand	29	15.8	17.9	17.9
	Somewhat understand	84	45.9	51.9	69.8
	Not sure	39	21.3	24.1	93.8
	No idea	10	5.5	6.2	100.0
	Total	162	88.5	100.0	

Source: Questionnaire

The table shows the following-

Understanding Spectrum (n=162 aware respondents)

-Fully understand (17.9%): Only about 1 in 6 investors claim complete comprehension.

- Somewhat understand (51.9%): Over half have partial knowledge, indicating surface-level awareness.

-Low Clarity (30.3% combined)

- Not sure (24.1%): Lack confidence in their understanding.

- No idea (6.2%): Completely unfamiliar despite being "aware" of mutual funds.

Critical Insight

- 69.8% (somewhat + fully understand) grasp basic concepts, but 30.3% remain confused—a significant financial literacy gap.

Table 6.7: What do you think is the biggest benefit of mutual funds?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Higher returns than traditional investments	14	7.7	8.6	8.6
	Professional fund management	68	37.2	42.0	50.6
	Diversification of risk	44	24.0	27.2	77.8
	Tax benefits (ELSS)	24	13.1	14.8	92.6
	Don’t know	12	6.6	7.4	100.0
	Total	162	88.5	100.0	

Source: Questionnaire

Top Perceived Benefits

- Professional Management (42.0%): The most recognized advantage, highlighting investor trust in expert management over DIY investing.

- Diversification (27.2%): A quarter of respondent’s value risk-spreading, a core MF selling point.

- Tax Benefits (14.8%): ELSS awareness is moderate but trails behind other benefits.

Lower Priority

- Higher Returns (8.6%): Surprisingly low, suggesting investors prioritize safety/trust over return potential.

- Don’t know (7.4%): Even among aware respondents, some remain unclear about benefits.

Table 6.8: What concerns you the most about investing in mutual funds?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Market risk	23	12.6	14.2	14.2
	Lack of knowledge	78	42.6	48.1	62.3
	Fraud/scams	35	19.1	21.6	84.0
	Long lock-in periods	23	12.6	14.2	98.1
	No concerns	3	1.6	1.9	100.0
	Total	162	88.5	100.0	

Source: Questionnaire

Primary Concerns

- Lack of Knowledge (48.1%): The dominant worry, aligning with prior data where only 17.9% fully understood mutual funds.
- Fraud/Scams (21.6%): Reflects distrust in the system, possibly fueled by media reports or anecdotal experiences.
- Market Risk (14.2%) & Lock-in Periods (14.2%): Secondary but notable, especially for risk-averse or liquidity-needy investors.

Minimal Concerns

- Only 1.9% has no concerns, suggesting near-universal apprehension despite high awareness (88.5%).

Table 6.9: Current Investments Frequencies				
		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Current Investments[a]	Savings account	89	9.5%	54.9%
	Fixed Deposits (FD)	122	13.0%	75.3%
	Gold/Jewelry	116	12.4%	71.6%
	Real Estate	121	12.9%	74.7%
	Post Office Schemes (PPF, NSC, etc.)	120	12.8%	74.1%
	Mutual Funds	126	13.4%	77.8%
	Stocks	117	12.5%	72.2%
	Others ____	127	13.5%	78.4%
Total		938	100.0%	579.0%
a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.				

Source: Questionnaire

Most Popular Investments (% of Cases)

- Mutual Funds (77.8%): The 1 choice, aligning with high awareness (88.5%) and trust in professional management (42% top benefit).
- Fixed Deposits (75.3%): Close second, reflecting risk-aversion and guaranteed returns appeal.
- Real Estate (74.7%) & Gold (71.6%): Traditional assets remain staples, especially in Indian portfolios.
- Stocks (72.2%): High engagement, but likely concentrated among younger or higher-income investors.

Other Observations

- "Others" (78.4%) leads but lacks specificity—could include crypto, bonds, or informal investments.
- Savings Accounts (54.9%): Surprisingly low, suggesting respondents actively invest rather than park cash.

Table 6.9: Interest in learning Frequencies				
		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Interest in Learning[a]	What would encourage you to invest in mutual funds?	83	11.2%	51.2%
	Financial literacy programs	130	17.6%	80.2%
	Success stories from other women	132	17.9%	81.5%
	Easy online investment options	129	17.5%	79.6%
	Low-risk options (e.g., debt funds)	129	17.5%	79.6%
	Support from family	136	18.4%	84.0%
Total		739	100.0%	456.2%
a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.				

Source: Questionnaire

Top Motivators for Investment Interest (% of Cases)

- Support from Family (84.0%): The strongest driver, reinforcing the influence of personal networks (earlier data showed 51.9% of decisions made by spouses).
- Success Stories (81.5%) & Financial Literacy Programs (80.2%): Peer validation and education are critical for trust-building.
- Easy Online Options (79.6%) & Low-Risk Choices (79.6%): Demand for convenience and safety is nearly tied.

Lower Priority

- General Encouragement (51.2%): Only half cite this, suggesting vague "push" factors are less effective than specific solutions (e.g., literacy, low-risk funds).

Table 6.10: Educate women Frequencies				
		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Educate Women[a]	Local workshops/seminars	84	14.1%	51.9%
	Online webinars	127	21.3%	78.4%
	Mobile apps in Telugu	128	21.5%	79.0%
	Through SHGs (Self-Help Groups)	127	21.3%	78.4%
	Others ____	129	21.7%	79.6%
Total		595	100.0%	367.3%
a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.				

Source: Questionnaire

Top Preferred Learning Methods (% of Cases)

- Mobile Apps in Telugu (79.0%): The most sought-after tool, emphasizing demand for vernacular, tech-driven solutions.
- Online Webinars (78.4%) & SHGs (78.4%): Tie for second place, showing equal appeal for digital and community-based learning.
- Local Workshops (51.9%): Only half prefer in-person sessions, likely due to convenience barriers (travel/time).

Other Observations

- "Others" (79.6%) leads but lacks detail—could include TV/radio, school programs, or peer groups.
- Lowest for Local Workshops (51.9%): Suggests scalability challenges with physical events.

Table 6.11: Awareness of Mutual Funds in Karimnagar					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Poor Awareness of Mutual Funds	3	1.6	1.9	1.9
	Moderate Awareness of Mutual Funds	94	51.4	58.0	59.9
	High Awareness of Mutual Funds	65	35.5	40.1	100.0
	Total	162	88.5	100.0	

Source: Questionnaire

Awareness Levels**

- Moderate Awareness (58.0%): Over half of respondents have partial knowledge about mutual funds.
- High Awareness (40.1%): A significant portion is well-informed, likely due to urban exposure or financial literacy efforts.
- Poor Awareness (1.9%): Minimal, suggesting basic recognition exists even among the least informed.

Positive Trend

- Combined 98.1% (Moderate + High Awareness): Indicates strong penetration of mutual fund concepts in Karimnagar.

Table 6.11: Knowledge level of mutual funds in karimnagar					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Moderate Knowledge of Mutual Funds	120	65.6	74.1	74.1
	High Knowledge of Mutual Funds	42	23.0	25.9	100.0
	Total	162	88.5	100.0	

Source: Questionnaire

Knowledge Distribution

- Moderate Knowledge (74.1%): The majority understand basic concepts but lack depth (e.g., risk types, expense ratios).
- High Knowledge (25.9%): A quarter demonstrates advanced understanding, likely including experienced investors or finance professionals.

Table 6.12: Perception of Mutual Funds in Karimnagar					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Moderate Perception of Mutual Funds	116	63.4	71.6	71.6
	High Perception of Mutual Funds	46	25.1	28.4	100.0
	Total	162	88.5	100.0	

Source: Questionnaire

Perception Levels

- Moderate Perception (71.6%): The majority view mutual funds positively but with some reservations (e.g., "good but risky").
- High Perception (28.4%): A smaller segment strongly trusts MFs as wealth-building tools.

Table 6.13: Behavioral Intentions of Women in Karimnagar on Mutual Funds					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Moderate behavioral intention of Mutual Funds	115	62.8	71.0	71.0
	High behavioral intention of Mutual Funds	47	25.7	29.0	100.0
	Total	162	88.5	100.0	

Source: Questionnaire

Behavioral Intentions

- Moderate Intention (71.0%): A significant majority of women are open to investing in mutual funds but may hesitate due to knowledge gaps or risk concerns.
- High Intention (29.0%): Nearly one-third are highly inclined to invest, likely driven by trust in MFs or prior positive experiences.

7. Findings & Conclusion

i. The sample is predominantly young, with nearly half of respondents aged 26-35.
ii. The sample is largely composed of salaried employees (45.9%), followed by self-employed individuals (19.7%).
iii. The sample is middle-income heavy, with 45.9% earning ₹20k-50k/month. This aligns with India's aspirational class but may underrepresent both ultra-low and high-income segments.
iv. While mutual fund awareness is robust (88.5%), the remaining 11.5% reveals an untapped segment.
v. Investors use diverse information channels, with newspapers, TV, and seminars leading. While digital adoption is growing, traditional media remains critical. Tailoring campaigns to demographic preferences (e.g., social media for youth, newspapers for older groups) could enhance reach.
vi. The data reveals a "knowledge half-life"—while awareness is high (88.5%), true understanding decays rapidly (only 17.9% fully get it). This gap presents risks (e.g., uninformed investments) and opportunities (targeted education).
vii. Investors primarily see mutual funds as a professional, risk-mitigating tool rather than a return-booster. While trust in experts is high, gaps persist in tax and return awareness.
viii. The first barrier to mutual fund adoption is knowledge gaps (48.1%), followed by trust issues (21.6%). While awareness is high, misconceptions persist.
ix. Indian investors *diversify across traditional and modern assets, with MFs leading (77.8%) but FDs/Gold close behind. While adoption is high, knowledge gaps persist—creating opportunities for targeted education.
x. Investors are most influenced by family support (84%) and success stories (81.5%), with strong demand for education (80.2%) and digital ease (79.6%).
xi. Women investors overwhelmingly prefer mobile apps in Telugu (79%) and SHGs/webinars (78.4%) for financial education. Local workshops are less scalable (51.9%).
xii. Karimnagar shows strong MF awareness (98.1% combined), but depth of understanding remains a challenge (58% moderate).
xiii. Karimnagar's investors are primarily moderately knowledgeable (74.1%), with room to grow into confident investors.
xiv. Karimnagar's investor's view MFs favorably but cautiously (71.6% moderate perception).
xv. Women in Karimnagar show strong potential for MF adoption (71% moderate + 29% high intention), but barriers like knowledge gaps and fraud fears persist.

8. Recommendations For Organizations

The following are the recommendations for organizations

1. Multi-Channel Financial Literacy Programs
   - Combine digital (mobile apps, webinars) and physical (SHG meetings, bank counter campaigns) channels
   - Use vernacular content tailored to local dialects and literacy levels
   - Focus on simplifying concepts like risk diversification and SIP benefits
2. Community-Based Peer Learning
   - Leverage existing community structures (SHGs, religious groups, farmer cooperatives)
   - Identify and train local financial champions as ambassadors
   - Organize regular investor meet ups for experience sharing
3. Behavioral Nudges for First-Time Investors
   - Create low-barrier entry products (₹100-500/month SIPs)
   - Develop goal-based investment frameworks (education, marriage, home purchase)
   - Offer trial periods with small-ticket investments
4. Trust-Building Mechanisms
   - Partner with local trusted institutions (banks, post offices, cooperatives)
   - Conduct transparent performance reporting in local languages
   - Organize AMC/regulator meet-and-greet sessions
5. Gender-Inclusive Strategies
   - Design women-specific communication and products
   - Conduct financial literacy at ANM centers, schools, and mahila mandals
   - Address cultural barriers through family engagement programs
6. Traditional-to-Modern Investment Migration
- Create comparison tools showing MF vs FD/real estate/gold returns
- Develop hybrid products combining safety of FDs with MF growth potential
- Target maturing FD investors for systematic transfer plans
7. Localized Communication Campaigns
- Use regional metaphors (agriculture analogies for compounding)
- Feature local success stories in community media
- Employ street theater and folk art for financial education
8. Institution-Based Distribution
- Train bank correspondents and post office staff as MF advisors
- Incorporate MF education into existing government programs
- Develop workplace investment programs for formal sector employees
9. Risk Mitigation Frameworks
- Promote debt funds and hybrid funds as starter products
- Develop visual risk assessment tools for new investors
- Create guaranteed return products for cautious investors
10. Continuous Feedback Systems
- Establish community feedback mechanisms
- Conduct regular financial health check-up camps
- Adapt products based on changing local needs

The approach emphasizes local context adaptation while maintaining scalability across similar semi-urban markets in India.

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EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTIMEDIA PACKAGE FOR TEACHING SCIENCE TO HEARING IMPAIRED STUDENTS AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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ABSTRACT: Inclusive education emphasizes the need for accessible teaching methods that cater to diverse learners, including students with hearing impairments. This study explores how the use of a multimedia instructional package can support science learning among hearing-impaired secondary school students. The objectives were to develop an accessible multimedia package for science instruction and to assess its impact on academic performance and learner engagement. A quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test control group design was employed, involving 40 hearing-impaired students from two inclusive schools. The experimental group received instruction through a specially designed multimedia package, while the control group was taught using traditional methods. Findings revealed a statistically significant improvement in the post-test scores and engagement levels of the experimental group compared to the control group. The study concludes that multimedia instruction is an effective strategy for improving science comprehension and participation among hearing-impaired learners and recommends its integration into inclusive science education practices.

KEYWORDS: Multimedia Instruction, Hearing-Impaired, Science Education, Inclusive Learning, Secondary School, Academic Achievement

1. INTRODUCTION

Science education plays a crucial role in developing analytical thinking and problem-solving skills at the secondary school level. However, it remains a challenging subject for students with hearing impairments due to its heavy reliance on verbal instruction, abstract concepts, and complex terminologies (Obi & Ozoemena, 2022). Traditional teaching methods often marginalize these learners, limiting their access to content and full participation in classroom activities (Mutanga, 2017).

In response to these challenges, multimedia instructional packages have emerged as a promising strategy for inclusive education. These packages integrate visuals, animations, captions,

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sign language, and interactivity to support diverse learning needs and make abstract scientific concepts more concrete and accessible (Mayer, 2009; Supasorn & Promarak, 2015). For hearing-impaired students, visual and interactive content can bridge communication gaps and foster better conceptual understanding.

Recent studies have shown that multimedia-based instruction significantly enhances learning outcomes among students with disabilities. For example, Okpani-Oko et al. (2024) found that hearing-impaired learners taught with multimedia tools performed better in economics than those taught through traditional methods. Similarly, interactive video and multimedia storytelling have improved vocabulary acquisition, engagement, and digital literacy in hearing-impaired learners (Ahmed, 2023; Suratman & Sari, 2022).

Building on this background, the present study investigates whether a specially designed multimedia instructional package can improve science learning outcomes and engagement among hearing-impaired secondary school students.

2. Review Of Literature

i. In a study conducted by Okpani-Oko, Ibenegbu, and Osakwe (2024), a multimedia instructional package was developed to teach economics to hearing-impaired students at the secondary school level in Nigeria. The quasi-experimental research revealed that students exposed to the multimedia tools outperformed those taught through traditional methods. The multimedia content included animations, text explanations, images, and sign language translations, which helped bridge communication gaps and made abstract economic concepts more concrete. The study concluded that such packages enhanced student motivation, participation, and comprehension. This research highlights the importance of designing visually rich, learner-friendly instructional materials tailored to the specific needs of learners with hearing loss.

ii. Ahmed (2023) investigated the impact of multimedia storytelling on vocabulary development among hearing-impaired children in primary schools. The intervention involved digital storybooks with animations, text captions, and character-based visuals, providing context and repetition in an engaging format. Compared to a control group using only printed texts and sign language, students in the experimental group demonstrated greater vocabulary retention and contextual usage. The study emphasized the importance of narrative structures, visual cues, and repetition in enhancing language acquisition for deaf students. Although focused on English language learning, the findings are transferable to science instruction, where abstract terms also require context and reinforcement.

iii. Suratman and Sari (2022) explored the use of interactive video content to teach digital literacy skills to hearing-impaired learners. Over three weeks, students engaged with videos enriched with text captions, visual prompts, and clickable interactive elements. The study employed a pre-test and post-test design and recorded a substantial improvement in students' digital literacy levels. The average normalized gain score was 0.72, indicating a high level of effectiveness. The researchers noted that the multimodal nature of the instruction—combining text, motion graphics, and interactivity—helped maintain attention and support knowledge retention. This finding supports the use of similar instructional approaches in content-heavy subjects like science.

iv. In Thailand, Supasorn and Promarak (2015) developed and evaluated a multimedia learning system designed to teach arithmetic to young deaf students. The system emphasized visual clarity, minimal textual overload, and user control over pacing and repetition. The experimental group showed significantly better performance than the control group in post-tests. Students reported enjoying the lessons more and feeling more confident about their understanding. The study suggests that learner autonomy and visual reinforcement are essential features when designing multimedia tools for hearing-impaired learners. Though focused on mathematics, this principle is equally applicable in science, where step-by-step visualization aids comprehension.

v. Wambui et al. (2021) examined hearing-impaired students' perceptions of ICT integration in teaching story grammar in English. The study involved the use of multimedia elements, including videos,

illustrations, and text on digital platforms. Survey results revealed that 89% of students felt more engaged during ICT-based lessons and reported improved understanding. The study concluded that ICT tools encouraged participation and helped reduce the instructional gap typically caused by hearing impairments. The students' positive attitudes toward ICT-based learning underline the motivational advantage of multimedia, which can be capitalized on in science instruction.

vi. Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning provides a theoretical foundation for using multimedia in instruction. According to the theory, individuals learn more deeply when information is presented in both visual and verbal forms, rather than through text or speech alone. This dual-channel processing enhances comprehension and memory retention, especially when extraneous cognitive load is minimized. Mayer's principles—such as segmenting, signaling, and multimedia principle—are directly applicable to designing instructional tools for hearing-impaired students, who rely heavily on visual content to process information. The theory supports the educational value of combining animations, images, and on-screen text, making it highly relevant for science topics that involve dynamic processes like photosynthesis or chemical reactions..”

3. Synthesis And Gap Identification

Across these studies, there is strong evidence that multimedia tools enhance academic achievement, engagement, and comprehension for hearing-impaired learners across various subjects including economics, language, mathematics, and digital literacy. These studies share common elements: use of visual aids, learner control, and interactivity. However, there is a noticeable gap in subject-specific research targeting science education at the secondary school level. Science often involves abstract, dynamic concepts that are difficult to convey through traditional text or sign language alone. This highlights the need for focused research on how multimedia tools can be tailored to meet the learning demands of hearing-impaired students in science classrooms.

.4. Objectives Of The Study

i. To design and develop a multimedia instructional package tailored to a selected science topic, specifically intended for use by hearing-impaired secondary school students.

ii. To examine and compare the academic performance of students who are taught using the multimedia instructional package with those taught through traditional instructional methods.

iii. To evaluate the levels of student engagement and motivation within multimedia-based learning environments, particularly among learners with hearing impairments.

5. Research Hypothesis

There is no statistically significant difference in science achievement between hearing-impaired secondary school students taught using traditional instructional methods and those taught using a multimedia instructional package.

6. Research Methodology

6.1 Research Design

The study adopted a quasi-experimental research design, specifically the pre-test/post-test control group design. This design was chosen to evaluate the effectiveness of the multimedia instructional package on the science achievement of hearing-impaired students while allowing for a comparison between experimental and control groups.

6.2 Participants

The sample consisted of 40 hearing-impaired students enrolled in two inclusive secondary schools. The participants were randomly assigned into two equal groups: 20 students in the experimental group and 20 students in the control group. The experimental group received instruction through the

multimedia package, while the control group was taught using traditional methods, such as sign language-supported lectures and printed materials.

6.3 Research Instruments

Two main instruments were employed to collect data:

i. Science Achievement Test (SAT): A researcher-developed test designed to assess students' understanding of the selected science topic. The test was validated by subject-matter experts to ensure content validity and reliability.
ii. Student Engagement Questionnaire (SEQ): A structured questionnaire developed to measure learners' engagement and motivation levels during the instructional period. The questionnaire focused on behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement indicators.

6.4 Procedure

The study was conducted over a period of three weeks and involved the following steps:

i. Pre-test Administration: Both groups completed the Science Achievement Test prior to the intervention to establish baseline performance.
ii. Intervention Phase: The experimental group received instruction using the multimedia package specifically developed for the study, which included visual animations, interactive simulations, and text captions. The control group continued learning through conventional methods.
iii. Post-test and Survey: After the instructional period, both groups were re-assessed using the same achievement test. Additionally, students completed the Student Engagement Questionnaire to gauge their level of involvement and motivation during the learning process.

7. Data Analysis And Interpretation

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize students' performance and engagement levels. To determine the statistical significance of the differences between the groups, an independent samples t-test was applied to the pre-test and post-test scores. The analysis aimed to identify whether the use of multimedia instruction had a measurable impact on students' academic performance.

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), and t-test Scores of Pre-Test and Post-Test for Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	Pre-Test Mean	Pre-Test SD	Post-Test Mean	Post-Test SD	t-value	p-value
Experimental	20	45.30	5.12	78.85	6.03	6.42	<0.001*
Control	20	44.90	5.45	62.40	7.12		

Significant at $p < 0.05$

Interpretation:

Both groups had similar performance in the pre-test, indicating comparable baseline knowledge. After the intervention, the experimental group showed a marked increase in mean scores (78.85) compared to the control group (62.40), suggesting the multimedia package enhanced learning outcomes.

The independent t-test indicates a statistically significant difference in post-test scores between the experimental and control groups ($t(38) = 6.42$, $p < 0.001$). This supports the hypothesis that multimedia instruction improves academic achievement among hearing-impaired students.

Table 2: Mean, SD and t test scores of Student Engagement

Group	N	Engagement Mean	Engagement SD	t-value	p-value
Experimental Group	20	4.15	0.45	5.11	<0.001*
Control Group	20	3.30	0.60		

(Engagement measured on a 5-point Likert scale) *Significant at $p < 0.05$

Interpretation:

Students in the experimental group reported higher engagement levels (M = 4.15) than those in the control group (M = 3.30), indicating greater motivation and involvement during multimedia-based instruction.

The t-test shows a significant difference in engagement scores favoring the experimental group ($t(38) = 5.11$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that multimedia instruction enhances learner engagement.

Table 3: Effect Size of Experimental group

Group	N	Pre-Test Mean	Pre-Test SD	Post-Test Mean	Post-Test SD	Cohen 'd'	Remarks
Experimental	20	45.30	5.12	78.85	6.03	2.41	Large Effect Size

The effect size (Cohen's d) for the difference in pre and post-test scores between the experimental group was 2.41, indicating a very large effect.

8. Results And Findings

i. Both experimental and control groups had similar baseline knowledge before the intervention.
ii. Students taught using the multimedia instructional package showed significantly higher science achievement compared to those taught through traditional methods.
iii. The multimedia group demonstrated greater improvement in understanding and retention of science concepts.
iv. Students in the multimedia group reported higher levels of engagement and motivation during the learning process.
v. Multimedia-based instruction was found to enhance active participation and interest among hearing-impaired students.
vi. The effect size (Cohen's d) for the difference in pre and post-test scores between the experimental group was 2.41, indicating a very large effect.
vii. The findings support the effectiveness of multimedia tools in improving both academic performance and learner engagement in inclusive science education.

9. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the use of a multimedia instructional package significantly improves science achievement among hearing-impaired secondary school students compared to traditional teaching methods. This aligns with Okpani-Oko et al. (2024), who reported enhanced academic performance in economics when multimedia tools were utilized, emphasizing the potential of multimedia to clarify complex and abstract concepts. Similarly, the increased engagement and motivation observed in this study are consistent with the results of Ahmed (2023), who found that multimedia storytelling enhanced vocabulary retention and learner interest among deaf students. The higher engagement scores suggest that multimedia elements such as visuals, animations, and interactive features can create a more stimulating learning environment, which corroborates Suratman and Sari's (2022) findings on the benefits of interactive videos in increasing digital literacy for hearing-impaired learners.

Furthermore, this study supports Supasorn and Promarak's (2015) emphasis on learner autonomy and visual reinforcement, demonstrating that multimedia enables students to control their learning pace and revisit content, which is particularly beneficial for learners with hearing impairments. The results also echo the conclusions drawn by Wambui et al. (2021), who reported positive student perceptions towards ICT integration in inclusive classrooms, reinforcing the motivational advantages of multimedia learning environments. Mayer's (2009) Cognitive Theory of

Multimedia Learning further explains these outcomes by highlighting how dual-channel processing through visual and verbal means reduces cognitive load and enhances understanding, particularly for learners who rely heavily on visual inputs. Taken together, these findings suggest that multimedia instructional packages are an effective and inclusive pedagogical tool that can bridge learning gaps in science education for hearing-impaired students.

10. IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study have several important implications for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers involved in special education and inclusive teaching. Firstly, the demonstrated effectiveness of multimedia instructional packages suggests that science educators should integrate visual and interactive technologies to better accommodate hearing-impaired students, enhancing their comprehension and engagement. Curriculum designers are encouraged to develop subject-specific multimedia resources tailored to the unique learning needs of students with hearing impairments. Additionally, teacher training programs should include modules on the effective use of multimedia tools to ensure educators are equipped to implement these instructional strategies. At a policy level, educational authorities should support the adoption of multimedia resources in inclusive classrooms by allocating funding and infrastructure, thereby promoting equitable access to quality science education for all learners.

11. CONCLUSION

This study provides compelling evidence that multimedia instructional packages significantly improve science achievement and learner engagement among hearing-impaired secondary school students. By leveraging visual and interactive content, multimedia tools help overcome communication barriers inherent in traditional teaching methods, making scientific concepts more accessible and understandable. The findings reinforce the critical role of technology in inclusive education and underscore the need for further research and development of multimedia resources tailored to diverse learner needs. Overall, the integration of multimedia instruction represents a promising approach to fostering academic success and motivation for hearing-impaired students, contributing to more equitable and effective science education.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed:

i. Integration of Multimedia in Curriculum: Schools, especially those with hearing-impaired students, should incorporate multimedia instructional packages into their science curriculum to enhance learning outcomes.
ii. Teacher Training and Professional Development: Educators should receive specialized training on the design and implementation of multimedia tools to effectively support hearing-impaired learners.
iii. Development of Accessible Educational Resources: Educational authorities and content developers should prioritize creating multimedia materials that are accessible, user-friendly, and specifically tailored for students with hearing impairments.
iv. Infrastructure and Resource Allocation: Schools should be equipped with the necessary technological infrastructure, including computers, projectors, and internet access, to facilitate multimedia-based teaching.
v. Parental and Community Involvement: Encouraging parents and communities to support the use of multimedia learning at home and in school can further enhance student motivation and achievement.

13. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

To build upon the current study, the following areas are recommended for future research:

i. Subject-Specific Multimedia Packages: Investigate the effectiveness of multimedia instructional tools across other science disciplines (e.g., biology, physics, chemistry) and at different educational levels.
ii. Longitudinal Studies: Conduct long-term studies to assess the sustained impact of multimedia instruction on academic achievement and engagement among hearing-impaired students.
iii. Comparative Studies: Compare multimedia instruction effectiveness across different types of disabilities to explore the generalizability of the findings.
iv. Qualitative Research: Explore students' and teachers' perceptions, challenges, and experiences with multimedia learning through interviews and focus groups.
v. Technological Innovations: Examine the use of emerging technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and gamification in science education for hearing-impaired learners.

14. LIMITATIONS

i. The sample size was relatively small and limited to only two inclusive secondary schools, which may affect the generalizability of the findings.
ii. The study focused on a single science topic, so the results may not be applicable to other subjects or broader science curricula.
iii. The quasi-experimental design did not involve random assignment, which could introduce selection bias between the experimental and control groups.
iv. The intervention period was short (three weeks), limiting the ability to assess long-term retention and sustained engagement effects.
v. Student engagement was measured through self-reported questionnaires, which may be subject to social desirability bias.

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AN ANALYSIS ON DISPOSAL OF CONSUMER CASES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE OF BIRBHUM CONSUMER DISPUTES REDRESSAL FORUM

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ABSTRACT: The consumer Protection Act 2019 has been enforced in order to redress the grievances of the consumers as a replacement to the Consumer Protection Act 1986. In this present study the author aims at focusing the role of consumer District Redressal Commission in Birbhum to redress the grievances of the consumers. Here the author collects the data of five years for the disputes cases registered in the Birbhum District Consumer Commission. This study is the combination of doctrinal and non-doctrinal method where, Secondary data has been collected by the author from various sources like newspapers, Journals, Periodicals and online searching website for consumer Disputes Cases (Confonet). Primary data has been collected by vising the Birbhum District Commission.

KEYWORDS: District Commission, Birbhum, Consumer, Consumer Complaints, Redressal of Consumer Complaints, Unfair trade practice, Deficiency in Service

1. EVALUATION OF THE PROBLEM

The Consumer Protection Act 1986(CPA) aims to protect and promote the interests of the consumers in a unified and effective manner. A consumer is an individual who compensates to consume the goods and services produced by a manufacturer to satisfy the personal wants. A person who purchases goods for the purpose of livelihood can be termed as a consumer. Consumer is a backbone of national financial system and it plays a vital role for the development of the nation. Swami Vivekananda said that consumer is a king. But the reality is that most of the cases the consumers are treated very badly. They are exploited by traders, manufacturers and dishonest businessman. In order to safeguard the interest of the Consumers, the Consumer Protection Act was passed in the year of 1986.This particular Act provides for three consumer Disputes redressal agencies in order to protect the self of the consumers. These agencies are working in the District level, state level and National Level Forums in West Bengal. There are total 25 District Consumer & total 629 District Forums (replaced by the word commission by 2019 Act) for District level. There exist total 35 of State Commissions for state level. There also exists one National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission. Our Consumer Protection Act 1986 provides that a consumer complaint shall be

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decided within three months where sample testing is necessary and six months where sample testing is not necessary. A complaint under the Consumer Protection Commissions can be filed if loss or damage is caused to the consumer due to unfair contract, unfair or restrictive trade practice of trader or service provider, the article purchased by a consumer is defective, the services availed by a consumer suffer from any deficiency, a trader or service provider, as the case may be, has charged for the goods or for the servicer mentioned in the complaint a price in excess of the stipulated price, Goods or services which will be hazardous to life and safety, when used, are being offered for sale to the public, a claim for product liability action can also be made against the product manufacturer, product seller or product service , as the case may be. But the researcher through the help of various literatures and books and journals gathers the knowledge that a large number of consumer complaints are pending all over India. Here the researcher would like to know the effectiveness of the Birbhum District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission for redressing the grievances of the consumers in order to know the actual level of implementation of the Consumer Protection Act.

2. Objectives Of The Study

i. There are twofold objectives of this research. The first objective of this research is to find out the applicability of the consumer protection Act in dealing with the cases relating to unfair Trade Practice in the District Forum particularly in Birbhum District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum.
ii. Another objective of this research is to access the performance of the forum in redressing the grievances of the complainants who are the victims of unfair trade practice.

3. Research Question

I. What is the level of implementation of the Consumer Protection Act in the District of Birbhum?
II. Is the number of consumer cases filed in Birbhum commission, an actual reflection of actual number of section 12 violations occurring in reality in Birbhum?
III. What is the reason for dismissal of cases and for elongation of the time period for disposal of cases?

4. Review Of Literature

i. Padma and Karnik (1990)1 in their book entitled “Complaints Handling” target those people of consumer protection groups who deal with complaints. The authors explain the entire process of Complaint Handling in a simple effective language using actual complaints handling by consumer Education and Research centre as examples. They stress the need for scientific approach to complaints handling. The broad areas covered in this book are process, follow-up and analysis of complaints and setting up a complaints service. The authors make it clear that the main objective of a consumer protection group is bringing about a just and fair solution to any complaint lodged with them by the consumer. According to them when complaints throw light on the paucity of laws in a particular area, the consumer protection groups can lobby for new laws or amendments in existing law.
ii. Reddy and Ramesh (1998) conducted a study on the role of an independent agency to protect the consumer interest in twin cities of Hyderabad and Secundrabad. Hyderabad forum received 12,116 cases since its inception, of which 8,051 (66%) have been dispensed of and 4,065 (34%) cases were pending. Study also reported that only 19 per cent of them were fully aware of the Consumer Protection Acts and more than half of the respondents were partially aware of the consumer rights and 30 per cent were not aware of it. Awareness of consumer protection was more among men than the women. From the above studies reviewed it was clear that maximum number of respondents were aware of consumer welfare programmers i.e., Consumer Protection Act but very few consumers utilized the facilities.

iii. Sreevidya (1993) in her dissertation work entitled *"Consumer Justice and Public Utility Services"* assesses the working formula under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 for rendering justice to the public utility Services.

iv. Lizzy (1996) in her PhD thesis entitled *"Women and Consumer Protection"* highlights the role of women in promoting consumerism in Kerala. She also suggests various measures for the speedy functioning of the consumer disputes redressal agencies in Kerala.

v. Sreevidya (1993) in her dissertation work entitled *"Consumer Justice and Public Utility Services"* assesses the working formula under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 for rendering justice to the public utility Services.

5. Limitations Of The Study

As it has been explained in the introduction, the researcher will in her dissertation attempt to find out the instances of the Section 12 of the consumer Protection Act 1986 violations and seek to holistically study the cases filed in 2016. A detailed study has been undertaken, but due to paucity of time and resource constraint, the researcher will be able to only study 16% of the cases filed in this year.

6. Suppositions

i. The Consumer Protection Act in spite of its intention of protecting the consumers have failed to secure their faith and even though there is a large instance of UTPs happening in the country, including Birbhum District, very few cases are filed and much less is resolved.

ii. The researcher believes that this is because a large number of people are doubtful regarding the applicability of the Act to redress the grievances suffered due to the unfair Trade practice. There are many loopholes in the legislation due to which a large number of complainants fail to prove their case. Taking advantage of the loopholes or lack of clarity in the legislation, the opposite parties seeks protection from the penalty. A large number of cases remains pending even after expiry of a long period due to which the complainants have lost their interest towards the case. It appears that sometimes the opposite parties in fear of punishment or penalty try to settle the case of carrying the litigation, like, securing bank drafts etc, prevent people from proceeding to the Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum.

7. Research Methods

This research is a mixed of doctrinal and empirical method. The author has visited the Birbhum District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum/Commission. Here the researcher has collected and used both primary and secondary data. Primary data's are collected from court records as obtained by the researcher by visiting the District consumer Forum, Birbhum and the researcher has collected the secondary data from books, journals, research papers, and CONFONET.

8. Historical Development Of The Consumer Protection Act

In India consumer had to buy what was offered and they had no choice even if the price was high, the quality and service was poor and terms of sales were unattractive and sometimes even unreasonable compared to situation prevailing in free economy countries. In U.S.A or Japan and Europe Consumers are not required to book a car or LPG connection for cooking or scooter by making a deposit with the company rather the manufacturer's offers credit to the buyer. Now that has started in India too in case of certain consumer durables where competition is tremendous. But there is also a matter of culture and business ethics.

In Indian Industry and trade the consumer is completely ignored even in the matter after sales service or keeping to their promise to repair or replacement. Consumers often felt helpless because our laws are very complicated, costly and time consuming and requires an advocate to plead the case. Often it was considered wise to get a thing repaired by incurring extra cost rather than endlessly requesting for

company engineer to look into it. When these problems started growing with the enlargement of market for consumer durables, consumers and Government woke up.

In the medieval period, the consumer protection continued to be prime concern of the rules. During Muslim Rule, a large number of units of weights were used in India[1]. During the sultanate period, the prices used were determined by local conditions.[2] During the rule Alauddin Khalji,[3] strict controls were established in market place[4]. In those days there was unending supply of gain to the city and gain- carries sold at prices fixed by the sultan. [5]There was a mechanism for the price enforcement in the market. Similarly, shop- keepers were punished for under weighting their goods. In the modern period, the British system replaced the age old traditional legal system in India. However, one of the outstanding achievements of British Rule in India was the formation of a unified nationwide modern legal system "Despite of the challenges of combing the British and Indian Legal systems," [6] the fabric of modern Indian Law…is un mistakenly Indian in its outlook and operation"[7] and the Consumer protection is not an exception to this perception. Some of the laws which were passed during the British regime concerning consumer interests are: The Indian Contract Act
1872, The sales of Goods Act of 1940, the Usurious Loans Act of 1918 and the Agriculture Procedure (Grading and Marketing Act)of 1937. These laws provided specific legal protection for the consumers.[8]

For fifty years, the Sale of Goods Act of 1930(SGA) was the excusive source of consumer protection in India. The SDG, drafted with precisions, is "an admirable piece of legislation". [9]It is also praised as a "Consumer Charter". The main protection for the buyer against the seller for defective goods is found in Section 16 of the Act. It provides exceptions to the principles of caveat emptor (Let the buyer be aware) and the interests of the buyers are sufficiently safeguarded. Phrases such as "skill and judgement of the seller, reliance on seller skill", and the test of "merchantable quality" provide effective remedies to the buyers. Courts interpreted these rules in the consumers favour.[10]The SGA was the exclusive consumer legislation until 1986, with the passage of the Consumer Protection Act of 1986 and Consumer protection Amendment Act of 2019, designed to supplement the remedies already provided under the SGA

Consumer Protection was also provided within India's Criminal justice system. The Indian Penal Code of 1860 has a number of provisions to deal with crimes against consumers. It deals with offences related to the use of false weights and measures[11], the sale of adulterated food and drinks, the sale of noxious food or drink, the sale of adulterated drugs.[12]

Consumer protection legislation enacted after India's independence from the Britain includes: The Essential Commodities Act of 1955, The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act of 1954 and the standard of weights and Measures Act 1976. A benefit of these Acts is that they do not require the Consumer to prove mens rea.[13] Rather "the offences are of strict liability, and not dependent upon any particular intention or knowledge". [14]Criminal law in the field of consumer protection has acquired much significance as consumers are less inclined to go to civil court for small claims. It has been said that "the fundamental value of criminal law in the field of consumer protection is a high one at

[1] Maulana Hakim Syed About Hai, India-During Muslim Rule 127(Mohiuddin Ahamed trans,1977)
[2] S.R.Bakshi, Advanced History of Medieval India Vol.1287(2003)
[3] 1296-1316

[4] Irfan Habib, the price Regulations "ala"Uddin Khalji-A Defence of "za" Barnai, in Money and The Market in India 1100-170085(Sanjoy Subrahmayam ed.1998)
[5] Ibid.at 88

[6] Marc. Galanter, Law and Society In Modern India15(1997)
[7] Journal of Texas Consumer Law
[8] ibid
[9] Gorom Borrie & Aubrey L. Diamond, The Consumer, Society and The Laws65 (1964)
[10] Ibid
[11] Indian Penal Code No.45 of 1860, ch 13 SS264-67
[12] Ibid Ss.272-276
[13] Guilty mind
[14] D.N.Saraf, Law of Consumer Protection India 169 (1901)

consumer protection as pedigree".[15] Another view is that there has been an attempt to look at consumer protection as "public interest issue rather than as a private issue" to be left to individuals for settlement in court.

In addition to the remedies under contract and criminal law, consumers have rights under the tort laws. Based on its numerous legal intricacies, however, tort law is not the ideal remedy for the injured consumers in India. For example, the traditional doctrine of negligence imposes heavy responsibility on the plaintiff to prove each of its required elements. These essential legal requirements naturally encourage injured consumers to pursue legal remedies under different laws. Not surprisingly it is estimated that for about half a century from 1914-1965, only 613 tort cases came before the appellate courts.[16]

The orthodox legal requirement under the law of torts and contracts forced the policy makers to craft specific legislation to protect consumers. As a result, the consumer protection Act 1986 has been passed.

In 1986 the consumer Protection Act was passed to provide for the better protection of the interest of the consumers and for that purpose to make provisions for the establishment of consumer's councils and other authorities for the settlement of the consumer's disputes and for matters connected therewith.[17]

Before Consumer Protection Act was passed in 1986 there was none to hear complaints of consumers. The District forums and state and nation commissions have been taking the complaints very seriously and in many cases have ordered severe punishment both in case of goods and services. The definition on Defects[18], Deficiency[19], Restrictive and Unfair Trade Practices[20] are so wide that every dissatisfactions of consumer is covered and if he is deceived in any manner he can approach theThe judgement of the forum and commissions have encouraged the consumers to approach more frequently to these bodies. But with the increase in the number of the cases there are inordinate delays in listening to complaints and passing the orders. Further, with the passage of time it is becoming almost necessary to engage a lawyer though not required in law. This is making the system costly.

Actually the protection cannot be bye law alone but proper business culture and competition in the system is needed. With the increased competition and globalization consumer is cared better by MNCs and gradually Indian companies are also taking queue from them. However, as yet after service is far from satisfactory, sometimes even in in case of well reputed companies.

In certain cases considerable punishment has been awarded but there is much to learn from foreign companies who withdraw their product if found defective even without complaints. It has been reported in Economic Times of 21st September 2000 that "Honda Motor Co. today became the latest big Japanese manufacturer to recall potentially defective products, amounting a half a million cars in Japan.

The recall would cost 2.6 billion yen (Dollar 24 million): similarly Continental General Tire is expected to announce the recall of about 80000 tyres on the Navigator sport Utility vehicles made by Ford Motor co. over the fear of chunks of trade may come off (Economic Times 20th Sept.2000). Firestone announced the recall of 6.5 million 15inch tyrasamid growing reports they can shred and cause deadly accidents. The cost of withdrawal will be 400-500 million Dollars.

In India such things do not happen because there is no consumer movement like as is there is in USA. But it is certain that after passing of Consumer Protection Act things have started improving and more

[15] Goron Borrie, The Development of consumer Law and Policy: Bold Spirits and Timorous Souls 3(1984)
[16] See Wormell Vs. R.H.M. Agriculture(east), Ltd(1987)1 W.L.R 1901
[17] Preamble of the Consumer Protection Act 1986
[18] Section 2(1)(f) of the Consumer Protection Act 1986
[19] Section2(1)(g) of the Consumer Protection Act 1986
[20] Section 2(1)(r) of the Consumer Protection Act 1986

and more consumers are coming forward with their complaints. It has been reported in March 2001 that there is move to further strengthen the law so that delays in disposal of cases is reduced.

Now, coming to the researcher topic, unfair trade practice is a type of offence that has been recognized under the CPA 1986. Let us look at the relevant provision concerning this offence in following section.

In Re Institute if Personal Management and Industrial Relations the use of the word "recognized" after its name constitute unfair trade practice, as it gave a false impression that all its courses are recognized by the Punjab Government, Whereas , in fact only one course was recognized by the state Government.

In Re Gen India, the commission held that making false claim regarding the quality of refrigerator as being free from manufacturing defects and further is not providing satisfactory service by timely replacement in terms of the warranty in a breach of clause(vii). Also that subsequent replacement of the machine after the complaint has been filed with the commission was too late and did not wipe out the unfair trade practice indulged in by the respondent, as it deprived the consumer of the use of the refrigerator for a long period. A "cease and desist" order was passed requiring the respondent to refrain from indulging in such unfair trade practice amounting to breach of warranty on his part.

Therefore we see that consumer protection has been understood to be a necessity by the state. For the purpose of this Research, the researcher will be doing empirical work in the District of Burdwan to understand the instance of UTP in the Forum

9. Analysis Of Birbhum Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum

The researcher had visited the Forum for total period of 10 days for the purpose of this research and made the following observation.

9.1. Qualitative Data

The forum is situated at District:, PIN. At the time of visiting the researcher found out that there are three judges in the Forum, i.e.; The President and two member judges. The name of the President is Biswanath Konar. Soumen Sikhdar was one of the member judge and Miss Rina Mukherjee was another member judge.Between two member judges one was female member. The working days of Consumer Forum is Monday to Friday from 12o' clock to 3 pm. Steps (Hazira or petition) are required to be filed within 10 am to 12 o'clock on the morning. Apart from the judges there are 6 other official staffs including Peshkar and stenographer. There are also two female staffs. The researcher found that each working day is generally fixed for 2 admission hearings and 2 arguments along with various other hearings. These are the stages of disposal of a consumer complaint case. However there might be some cases where all the stages might not be applicable.

These stages are as follows:

i. Filing of the case
ii. Admission hearing
iii. Filing written version
iv. Filing written statement
v. Filing evidence by the complainant
vi. Filing evidence by the opposite parties.
vii. Questioning by the opposite parties
viii. Answer for questioner by the complainant
ix. Questioning by the complainant
x. Answer for questioner by the opposite parties
xi. Prayer for expert opinion by the complainant
xii. Answer of the expert opinion
xiii. Cross examination of the expert opinion
xiv. Argument
xv. Judgement

For the purpose of empirical work, the author collected cases that were filed and disposed of in 2016-2022.Before the author elaborates on her research and lays out her findings, she would like to explain a few terms that she encountered in her field research.For the purpose of the study, it needs to define two terms in relation to conclusion of consumer complaint cases. These are as follows:

a. Disposed of cases

b. Dismissed cases

a. disposed of cases:

Disposed of cases generally includes those cases, which have been concluded on the merit of the case. They may either be dismissed by the court for not having sufficient cause as insisted upon by the complainant. Alternatively disposed of cases may also include those cases that have been allowed and decreed upon.

b. Dismissed cases:

Dismissed cases can be generally defined as thoses cases which are dismissed due to some technical grounds like the following:

i. Dismissed due to non admission of the complaint.
ii. Dismissed due to non prosecution or Dismiss for default.
iii. Dismissed due to withdrawal of cases for various reasons.

Dismissed due to non admission

It means:

When complaint case as filed by the complainant become non admitted, due to lack of merit. In consumer complaint case, following points need to be satisfied:

a. Whether the complainant is a consumer or not?
b. Whether the case has been filed within 2 years from the cause of action?
c. Whether the purpose is a livelihood purpose of commercial purpose?

When it is satisfied that the purpose is a commercial purpose or the cause of action expires two years or the complainant is not at all a consumer before the opposite parties then the case becomes dismissed as non admitted.

Dismissed due to non- prosecution or Dismiss for Default

A case becomes dismissed due to non prosecution or for dismiss for default, when the following criteria satisfied:

a. When both the parties to the complaint case are not present during the period of hearing.
b. When the complainant or his authorized attorney is not present, during the period of hearing.

In the first case the court has the sole power to dismiss the case and in the second case when the complainant or his authorized attorney is not present, during the period of hearing.

In the first case the court has the sole power to dismiss the case and in the second case when the complainant or his authorized attorney has not been filed any steps during hearing dates, then either on written request petition of the opposite or on using its discretionary powers, the court may dismiss the case on the ground of non prosecution or dismiss for default.

Dismissed due to withdrawal of consumer cases

Withdrawals of cases have been made due to the following grounds:

a. Withdrawal due to settlement of cases outside the court and /or
b. Withdrawal due to some technical fault in the case.

9.2. Quantitative Data Collection

The author split the collection of data into two years 2016

In the year of 2016 total 153 complaints cases have been filed of which total 99 cases have been disposed of since 2022. Total 43 of the disposed complaints, which have been filed in the year 2016, have been declared in favor of the complainant and total 56 complaints filed in 2016 have been dismissed due to various reasons. In the year 2016 total 5 complaints are rejected as not admitted, 10 complaints have been dismissed due to withdrawal and 11 complaints have been dismissed due to not

allowed on contest i.e; complainant has failed to prove his case and total 10 cases have been disposed of on default or non prosecution.

9.3. Analysis:

The author in her field study analysed total 17 cases filed in the years 2016.

The author has covered the cases in her filed study mostly related to the products like Mobile Phones, Tablets, Mobile Insurance Policy, car, Life Insurance Policy etc. The researcher has observed that in most of the cases the complainant has filed their cases through their Ld. Advocates and a few numbers of cases had been filed by the complainants themselves. Similarly, the researcher had observed that the Opposite Parties almost in all cases were defended themselves by appointing their Ld. Pleaders and by the panelled Advocate of their company.

The analyst found out that the expert opinion is generally needed in medical negligence and various kinds of cases against the Insurance companies. Here the author had analysed the cases where the expert opinion is not essential for the disposal of the case. The author found out that amongst the cases that had been dismissed, most of the cases had been dismissed because the complainant did not choose to come or could not come.

The author found out that most of the cases had taken more than six months for its disposal. Therefore it is evident that in the District of Birbhum, the statutory limit was not being adheared to. This has been already explained by the researcher elaborately in her explanation that amongst 153 cases, only 16 cases were disposed off within six months. The maximum number of cases e.g. 31 took one year for the disposal and 32 cases tool as long as two years.

The author found out some cases which have been disposed off within one or two months but after taking due diligence it has come to the knowledge that those cases have been dismissed due to non admission or withdrawal by the parties. It comes to the knowledge of the researcher that a large number of cases have been heard ex parte. Sometimes cases have heard ex parte due to the non appearance of the opposite parties even after the service of summons or some times due to non filing of written version within 45 days of appearance by the Opposite Parties. Sometimes the court has been found to give a chance again to the Opposite Party to file written version even after crossing of its statutory time limit with or without imposition of cost to the Opposite Parties for such delay.

In case of the decreed complaints the Opposite Parties are directed to follow the award as given by the Ld. Forum, which may either be an order requesting the refund of the amount or replacement of the product amount, along with an order towards litigation cost and harassment cost to the complainant. This order has to abided by within 45 days, if the other party fails to comply with the decisions of the Forum.

The author found out that the amount of awarded compensation cost and litigation cost is not fixed and variable, dependent on the facts and prayer/claim of the complaint case. The Ld. Forum also enjoys the power to award interest, payable by the opposite party, upon the total awarded amount. The amount of interest is also not fixed and to impose the interest is the discretion of the Ld. Forum.

In the Consumer Protection Act 1986, there is no possibility of awarding an imprisonment sentence to the loosing party in the Consumer Complaint Case. However if the loosing party fails to comply with the order and the original complainant chooses to proceed to the forum with an execution case then there is a possibility of awarding an imprisonment sentence. Birbhum District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum now Commission is aiding by the statutory requirement.

Therefore the forum in the consumer Complaint case can and has imposed orders to refund of money or replacement of product along with the necessary compensation and litigation cost deemed appropriate. It had been found by the researcher that Forum cannot impose more than Rs. 7500/- as the litigation cost but it has the discretionary power to impose any amount as compensation. In many cases the Forum had imposed Rs.10000/- as compensation cost. Sin most of the cases the Forum imposed cost on the Opposite Parties. Amount of cost is different in different cases. Maximum cost was Rs,5 thousand as imposed by the Forum against the Opposite Parties.The researcher found that minimum compensation is Rs.500/-. The researcher looked out 12 cases and expert opinion was taken

in none of the cases. Due to lack of time it was not possible to cover the cases where expert opinion was needed and to look at what was the value of such opinion. Six cases were heard ex parte and six cases were disposed off on contest. The amount of filing charge or court fees depends upon the amount of compensation, litigation cost and cost for mental agony and harassment and the price of the product or the repairing cost and cost for mental agony and harassment and the prices of the product or the repairing cost and cost for mental agony as mentioned in the prayer portion.

Table 1: Data of consumer complaint cases during 2016

Basis	Number of cases
Cases filed	153
Cases disposed off	99
Cases allowed in favour of the complainant	43
Cases dismissed due to various reasons	56
Pending Cases	54

Table 2: Disposed of /dismissed cases due to various reasons, filed in the year 2016

Basis	Number
Dismissed as not admitted	5
Dismissed for default	20
Dismissed due to withdrawal /out of court settlement	10
Dismissed on contest / not allowed (cases go on favour of the opposite parties)	21

10. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

i. The Consumer Protection Act 1986 is a kind of social legislation. It intends to protect the large body of consumers from unfair trade practices of the tainted product and service providers.

ii. Consumer Forums/Commissions can give certain reliefs. These are the follows:-Removal of defects from the goods, Replacement of the goods, Refund of the price paid, Removal of defects or deficiencies in the service, Award of compensation for the loss or injury suffered, Discontinue and not to repeat unfair trade practice or restrictive trade practice, to withdraw hazardous goods from being offered for sale, to cease manufacture of hazardous goods from being offered for sale, to cease manufacture of hazardous goods and desist from offering services which are hazardous in nature, if the loss or injury has been suffered by a large number of consumers who are not identifiable conveniently, to pay such sum determined by the commission, to issue corrective advertisement, to provide adequate costs to parties.

iii. A Complaint shall consist of certain particulars. These are the follows:-Name and complete address of the complainant, Name and complete address of the Opposite Parties, Date of purchase of goods or services availed, Amount paid for the above purpose, Particulars of the goods purchased with numbers of details of service availed, Details of complaint, whether it is against Unfair Trade Practices/supply of defective goods/ deficiency in service provided/ collection of excess price, should explicitly be mentioned in the complaint petition, Bills/ receipts and copies of connected correspondence, if any, relief sought for this Act, Complaint should be signed by the complainant or his authorised agent.

iv. A complaint when made in the District Forum/Commission shall be filed in three sets and where it is filed in the National Commission, it shall be filed in four sets with additional sets equal to the number of opposite parties.Every complaint shall clearly contain particulars of dispute and the relief claimed and shall also be accompanied by copies of such documents as are necessary to prove the claim made in the complaint. A consumer can argue his own case or can be represented through authorized or agency.

v. With the advent in technology, digitization has become norm of the day. E-Commerce, direct selling have redefined the market and provided a new dimension to consumer-seller relationship. These practices besides providing ease of transaction have also posed certain challenges for the consumers to deal with. With the aim to address the new challenges

faced by consumers in the digital era and provide timely and effective administration and settlement of consumer disputes, the Parliament, passed the landmark Consumer Protection Bill, 2019 on 6 August 2019.

vi. The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 received the assent of the President of India and was published in the Official Gazette on 9 August 2019. Barring a few provisions, the New Act has come into force from 20th July 2020 with government notifying Rules and provisions like Consumer Protection Councils, Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions, Mediation, Product Liability and punishment for manufacture or sale of products containing adulterant / spurious goods.

vii. The New Act replaces the more than three-decade old Consumer Protection Act, 1986. The 1986 Act has been in operation for more than 33 years, still there were deficiencies and shortcomings with respect to its operation which made it difficult for the consumers to get relief. The Act was amended from time-to-time to bring it in accordance with changes brought about by liberalization, globalization and digitalization. But it failed to achieve desired objective of providing better protection of the interests of consumers.

viii. It has been observed in this study that subjects of higher age group are more in favour of the effectiveness of Consumer Forum as compared to lower age group subjects. Results also indicate that female complainants hold better option for the effectiveness of consumer Forum as compared to male subjects. It has been also found that subjects having higher income believed the consumer Forum to be an effective way of getting justice as compared to lower income group.

ix. The observations and collection of data and analysis prove the supposition of study as correct for a majority of cases. However there were certain cases that the Consumer Protection Act is after all not absolutely redundant. The observation and collection of data by the researcher shows that the Consumer Protection Act 1986, in various cases has achieved success by protecting the interests of the buyers and thereby redressing the grievances of the buyers.

x. But in the other cases, in spite of its several provision for protecting the interest of the consumers have failed to protect the interest of the consumers and taking advantage of the loopholes of this Act the sellers, trade and service providers seek protection in various instances. The Consumers lost their interest because the cases have not been solved within the statutory time of six months; it takes the High cost for carrying the case. The blad truth is that consumer courts do not have enough benches to hear the cases. Companies do not fear a consumer's voice in a court, where it has legal eagles on its side and there is not an audience looking on. Most of the cases dismissed due to lack of necessary papers and documents. A seller gets no penalty. Consumers loose their cases due to the malpractices done by the dishonest sellers and service providers.

xi. A large number of people have no knowledge about the Consumer Protection Act and Consumer Forum. Consumer awareness is an act of making sure the buyer or consumer is aware of the information about products, goods, services, and consumer rights. Consumer awareness is important so that buyer can take the right decision and make the right choice. Consumer awareness refers to two key concepts. These are the follows:

xii. How knowledgeable potential consumers are about your brand, services or products and how conscious customers are of their needs or wants in relation to the companies offerings. Consumers have the right to information, right to choose, right to safety, right to heard, right to seek redressal, right to consumer education. But the bitter true is that most of the consumers are unaware of their so called rights as provided by the consumer protection Act. That's why a large number of people has zero concept about this District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum. Not only that a large number of people in our society do not have the idea whether there exist any option or not against the cheat as done by the dishonest sellers and market providers. A very small number of people have the idea about this District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forums and their roles. Sometimes the Forums take a long time to dispose of the cases. Due to this people looses the faith and confidence

from the effectiveness of the District Forum. The Government and NGOs working for consumer welfare should arrange programs in every locality to increase consumer awareness about their rights and about the utilities of the Consumer Protection Act. Seminars are required to be conducted. Quality test should be conducted by the organization after which they can release the result and educate the consumer with the quality of the product that consumers have been using since ages. There are certain NGOs which help the consumers in solving issues and addressing their grievances. They can play the role of mediators in linking consumers to other agencies to file complaints and solve the problems. They can help the consumers to stand for their rights. The malpractices in consumer good and contamination in products are showcased to consumers. They are to be made aware of every thing related to products so that if in case they are in some problems related to products they can approach the concerned people to resolve.

xiii. The NGOs should set certain principles when they are established. Political interference should be totally avoided. If politicians are involved, then the aim of the establishment will be of waste. It will be like a political party only. In the same way NGO's should not get any bribes and mislead consumers. They should be fair in their evaluation and reveal what is the true regarding the products. Publicity should be avoided. It is a service organization, so if publicity comes then the purpose of the organization will not be fulfilled. If a NGO is fair enough to reveal all details of the products, they should be ready to face the consequences. They should also be ready to face the consequences. They should have a high tolerance level and violence should be restored at any case.

xiv. At the end of the study the author suggests that amendments should be made again in the Consumer Protection Act to make the Provisions of the Act more specific and protecting the interest of the consumers. The limitation period of two years for the filing of the case, after the instance of unfair trade practice suffered by the consumers should be elongated at least up to 5 years from the happening of the UTP, because the Opposite Parties take advantage of the limitation period. Further, the researcher recommends that a penalty be fixed onto the Forum and errant advocates for grant of adjournments and delaying the cases unnecessarily. This would perhaps go a long way to ensure that consumer cases are limited disposed off.

xv. The author further suggests that the filing cost and other incidental cost incurred for proceeding with the case, should be reduced to help the common people to knock the door of the Forum in case of UTP as suffered by them. The author suggests that there should be at least two consumer forums in a District where the District covers a large area to make the people easier to file their case to their nearby consumer forums.

xvi. Mobile courts could also be set up which can go to different places which can hear the complaints summarily and decide matters. The menace of foreign goods has invaded the markets. Now days the markets are flooded with eatables and other consumer goods which are not undertake any guarantee for their safety or usefulness.

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GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY: INTEGRATED POLICY, TECHNOLOGICAL, AND COMMUNITY-BASED STRATEGIES FOR AQUIFER RESILIENCE

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ABSTRACT: Groundwater depletion poses significant risks to India's water security agriculture and ecosystems especially in areas such as the Indo-Gangetic plain and Punjab employing gis mapping grace satellite data hydrological models and stakeholder surveys this research identifies depletion hotspots examines trends from 2000-2025 and forecasts scenarios through 2050 results indicate a rapid decrease showing yearly drops reaching 05 meters in essential regions yet restoration is possible with cohesive approaches the framework comprises regulations extraction caps tiered pricing technologies controlled aquifer recharge IoT surveillance and community programs water budgeting integrating traditional and modern practices latest figures from 2024-2025 indicate a rise of 15 bcm in recharge and a reduction of 3 bcm in extraction underscoring advancements under initiatives such as Atal bhujal yojana this adaptable framework provides workable solutions for aquifer resilience in India a systematic survey was given to 120 stakeholders in water-scarce areas of India using purposive sampling data analysis employed descriptive statistics within spss 26 the research highlights a fair level of awareness and advocates for improved literacy initiatives to encourage sustainable behaviours..

KEYWORDS: Aquifer durability community, Water governance controlled, Aquifer replenishment policy changes, Groundwater exhaustion, IoT surveillance

1. INTRODUCTION

The reduction of groundwater poses a significant risk to India's water security and agricultural structure jeopardizing 60 of irrigation and 85 of rural water supply as of august 28 2025 the central groundwater board CGBC indicates that 15 of India's 718 assessed blocks are critically over-exploited experiencing a recharge shortfall of 28 billion cubic meters bcm especially in Punjab where water levels drop by over 05 meters annually in Rajasthan's thar desert traditional chaukas have elevated local aquifers by 1-2 meters blending heritage with modern techniques however a 50-year surge in extraction driven by agriculture and urban growth has diminished recharge areas by 10 since 2000 further complicated by erratic monsoon patterns the Atal bhujal yojana aby allocated 15 bcm for recharge in 2024-2025 yet fragmented initiatives undermine overall effectiveness this study introduces a unified strategy leveraging gis iot and community participation to safeguard aquifers supporting India's ambition of achieving a 5 trillion economy by 2030.

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2. Research Methodology

A merged questionaire with 5-point Likert scale was ancient to arrange knowingness, cognition, perceptions, and behavioural intentions among Indian stakeholders, supplemented by demographic questions. The study covers:

Part 1 Basic Awareness

- We gain heard approximately groundwater depletion as a major issue
- We understand what managed aquifer recharge is
- We know that groundwater is subject to overexploitation risks
- We are aware that sustainable practices can yield better long-term water security than unlimited extraction4
- We know that groundwater management is regulated by CGWB in India

Part 2 knowledge level

- We acknowledge the inequity betwixt important over-exploited and excellent aquifer zones
- We interpret how Atal bhujal yojana full treatment
- We am mindful of incentives facing reload projects
- We recognize how to reminder aquifer levels e.g. via iot sensors
- We are mindful of costs associated with unsustainable origin

Part 3: Perception

- We have incorporated strategies area good for long-run bodyofwater credential.
- We believe administration schemes for groundwater administration.
- We experience that sustainable practices are too composite to use.
- We have talented warning is needful for aquifer reload.
- We think groundwater sustainability is only for large-scale farmers.

Part 4: Behavioral Intentions

- We are likely to gain water-saving practices in the near twelvemonth.
- We would recommend sustainable methods to my communityofinterests.
- We take reload techniques across independent pumping due to resiliency.
- We hold discussed groundwater issues with class/neighbours.
- We experience self-assured in operative in community water management.

The questionaire was administered to 120 stakeholders (farmers, leaders, policymakers) in water-stressed Indian states victimisation purposive sampling. Data was analyzed with descriptive statistics in SPSS 26.

3. Literature Review

Groundwater underpins India's agricultural economic system encouraging 60 of irrigation and 85 of rural drink water however faces escalating depletion amid mood variableness and over-extraction the central ground water board CGWB 2024 estimate estimates yearly reload at 44690 billion three-dimensional meters bcm and origin at 24564 bcm with over-exploited blocks declining from 23 to 19 since 2023 reflecting modest gains from interventions ISOR grace-fo data reveals persistent declines of 05 meters annually in the Indo-Gangetic plain exacerbated by a projected 15-20 monsoon reduction by 2050 as of august 2025 contamination affects 12 of samples with pollutants exceeding limits in Rajasthan and Haryana.

1. Managed Aquifer reload (MAR) inwards Gujarat's Saurashtra has upraised memory by 20%, bolstering drought resistance as of recent 2025 trials.
2. IoT systems in Maharashtra and Bengaluru's BWSSB-IISc project launched this month, slashed over-extraction by 12-15% with living information insights.
3. Drip irrigation in Rajasthan saves 25% of bodyofwater, yet hidden costs hinder small farmers, with Kritsnam's smart metering gaining traction in 2025.

4. Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABY), lengthened in 2024-2025, added 15 BCM to recharge across 80 districts, with communityofinterests monitoring peaking this week.
5. Chennai's tiered pricing, accomplished since 2023, lowered urban use by 10%, supported by the Ministry's 2025 groundwater atlas released today.
6. Inter-state coordination clay weak in the Ganga washbasin, with only partial enforcement as of this afternoon.
7. Rajasthan's johads have increased water tables by 1-2 meters, with 2025 yield data affirming success as of today.
8. Tarun Bharat Sangh's water committees in Jodhpur decreased wastage by 8-10%, with khadin systems enhanced by geospatial tools this year.
9. National Water Mission's 2024 campaigns lifted involution by 12%, though financing limits scaling as of this hour.
10. A MAR length of service assessment covers just 5% of over-exploited blocks post-2024, lacking broad hydrogeological insights.
11. IoT access gaps affect 70% of rural farmers, with policy enforcement consistent in only 30% of states today.
12. Cultural barriers to hybrid systems remain unstudied; ISRO's 2025 mapping and AI forecasts, launched this week, need equitable testing.

4. Research Gaps And Justification For The Study

Existing studies on groundwater administration in India lack comprehensive evaluations of Managed Aquifer reload (MAR) effectiveness across diverse hydrogeological zones, with alone 5% of over-exploited blocks assessed post-2024 interventions.

- Limited research explores the scalability of IoT-based monitoring systems, with 70% of rural farmers inattentive access due to substructure deficits
- Policy enforcement mechanisms remain understudied, with consistent implementation reported in just 30% of states, hindering uniform aquifer protection as per the 2025 Ministry of Jal Shakti update.
- Socio-cultural barriers to integration ancient practices like johads with unusual technologies are sickly authenticated, particularly in urbanizing regions, risking the loss of primary knowledge.

These gaps underscore the need for this study, which addresses India's groundwater crisis by evaluating integrated strategies across technology, policy, and communityofinterests' measurement. With 19% of blocks still over-exploited and a 15-20% monsoon decline projected by 2050, timely question is important to advise scalable solutions.

5. Analysis And Data Interpretation

Table 5.1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (Google Form Survey, 2025)

Age Group (Years)	Gender (Male/Female)	Occupation	Sample Size
18-30	45/55	Students	100
31-50	60/40	Farmers	150
51+	70/30	Policymakers	80

Interpretation: The Google Form survey of 330 participants highlights a diverse demographic, with farmers (31-50 age group) and male-dominated policymaker responses (51+), indicating varied awareness levels that need targeted education efforts.

Table 5.2: Annual Groundwater Recharge and Extraction Trends (BCM, 2023-2025)

Year	Recharge (BCM)	Extraction (BCM)	Net Balance (BCM)
2023	430	250	180
2024	438	248	190
2025	447	246	201

Interpretation: The data, collected via Google Forms from 150 water resource officers, shows a steady increase in recharge (4% from 2023 to 2025) and a slight decrease in extraction (2% reduction), indicating progress from initiatives like Atal Bhujal Yojana, though the net balance remains vulnerable to climate variability.

Table 5.3: Regional Groundwater Depletion Rates (cm/year, 2020-2025)

Region	2020	2022	2025
Indo-Gangetic Plain	4.5	4.8	4.2
Rajasthan	1.8	1.5	1.2
Gujarat	2.3	2.0	1.8

Interpretation: Responses from 200 farmers via Google Forms reveal a declining depletion rate, with Rajasthan showing the most improvement (33% reduction) due to traditional methods like johads, suggesting effective localized interventions.

Table 5.4: Awareness Levels by Demographic Category (2025)

Category	Awareness (%)	Knowledge (%)	Adoption Willingness (%)
Students	65	60	70
Farmers	45	38	40
Policymakers	68	70	72

Interpretation: Data from 300 Google Form respondents shows policymakers lead in awareness (68%) and willingness (72%), while farmers lag (45% awareness, 40% willingness), underscoring a need for farmer-focused training programs.

Table 5.5: Effectiveness of Technological Interventions (2025)

Technology	Adoption Rate (%)	Water Saved (%)	Cost Efficiency (Scale 1-5)
Drip Irrigation	30	25	3
IoT Monitoring	15	12	2
Managed Aquifer Recharge	20	18	4

Interpretation: Based on 180 Google Form responses from technologists, MAR shows higher cost efficiency (4/5) and water savings (18%), but low adoption (20%) suggests barriers like infrastructure need addressing.

Table 5.6: Policy Implementation Success Rates (2025)

Policy	Implemented Regions (%)	Compliance Rate (%)	Impact on Recharge (%)
Atal Bhujal Yojana	75	60	15
Tiered Pricing	40	50	10
Extraction Limits	30	45	8

Interpretation: Google Form data from 120 policymakers indicates ABY's high implementation (75%) and recharges impact (15%), but low compliance in extraction limits (45%) highlights enforcement challenges.

Table 5.7: Community Participation in Water Management (2025)

Region	Participation Rate (%)	Recharge Increase (m)	Traditional Method Used
Rajasthan	70	1.5	Johads
Maharashtra	55	0.8	Check Dams
Tamil Nadu	60	1.0	Percolation Tanks

Interpretation: From 250 Google Form community responses, Rajasthan's high participation (70%) and recharge (1.5m) via johads demonstrate the effectiveness of traditional methods in arid zones.

Table 5.8: Groundwater Quality Assessment (2025)

Parameter	Safe Samples (%)	Contaminated Regions	Contamination Type
pH	85	Punjab, Haryana	Acidity
Nitrate	75	Rajasthan	Agricultural Runoff
Fluoride	70	Gujarat	Natural Deposits

Interpretation: Google Form data from 200 water quality experts shows 15-25% contamination rates, with regional variations indicating a need for targeted purification strategies.

Table 5.9: Seasonal Groundwater Level Changes (2025)

Season	Pre-Monsoon (m)	Post-Monsoon (m)	Change (m)
January	8.5	-	-
August	-	7.8	0.7
November	8.0	7.5	0.5

Interpretation: Based on 150 Google Form hydrogeologist inputs, post-monsoon rises (up to 0.7m) suggest recharge potential, but seasonal variability requires consistent monitoring.

Table 5.10: Cost-Benefit Analysis of Interventions (2025)

Intervention	Initial Cost (INR Lakh)	Annual Benefit (INR Lakh)	ROI (%)
Drip Irrigation	50	20	40
IoT Systems	80	15	19
Check Dams	30	25	83

Interpretation: Google Form data from 100 engineers shows check dams offer the highest return on investment (83%), favouring community-led, low-cost solutions.

Table 5.11: Stakeholder Perception of Policy Effectiveness (2025)

Intervention	Initial Cost (INR Lakh)	Annual Benefit (INR Lakh)	ROI (%)
Drip Irrigation	50	20	40
IoT Systems	80	15	19
Check Dams	30	25	83

Interpretation: From 200 Google Form responses, NGOs and policymakers (65-70% effective) support policies more than farmers (40%), indicating a perception gap needing dialogue.

Table 5.12: Irrigation Water Use by Crop Type (2025)

Crop	Water Use (L/ha)	Area Cultivated (ha)	Total Use (Million L)
Rice	15,000	40,000	600
Wheat	7,500	30,000	225
Millets	3,000	10,000	30

Interpretation: Google Form data from 180 farmers shows rice's high-water demand (600 million L) drives depletion, advocating a shift to millets (30 million L) for sustainability.

Table 5.13: Training Program Impact on Awareness (2025)

Program Type	Pre-Training (%)	Post-Training (%)	Increase (%)
Farmer Workshops	45	60	15
Policy Seminars	68	75	7
Community Drills	50	65	15

Interpretation: Google Form feedback from 150 participants indicates farmer workshops and community drills boost awareness by 15%, suggesting scalable education models.

Table 5.14: Aquifer Recovery Potential by Region (2025)

Region	Current Status	Recovery Potential (%)	Timeframe (Years)
Rajasthan	Depleted	40	5
Punjab	Over-exploited	25	7
Karnataka	Semi-critical	60	4

Interpretation: Based on 120 Google Form expert opinions, Karnataka's high recovery potential (60%) in 4 years highlights the efficacy of existing recharge efforts.

Table 5.15: Gender Distribution in Water Management Roles (2025)

Role	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total Respondents
Community Leader	60	40	100
Technician	75	25	80
Policy Advisor	80	20	60

Interpretation: Google Form data from 240 participants shows male dominance (60-80%) in water roles, suggesting a need for gender-inclusive training to enhance participation.

Table 5.16: Depletion Trends in Indian Hotspots (2000-2025)

Region	Annual Decline (cm/year)	Primary Cause
Indo-Gangetic Plain	4-6	Irrigation
Punjab/Haryana	>50	Agriculture
Rajasthan	20-30	Urbanization
Gujarat	10-20	Industrial Use

Source: CGWB 2024 Assessment.

Table 5.17: Stakeholder Awareness and Intentions (2025)

Category	Awareness (%)	Knowledge (%)
Farmers	45	38
Local Leaders	60	55
Policymakers	68	70
Average	58	54

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

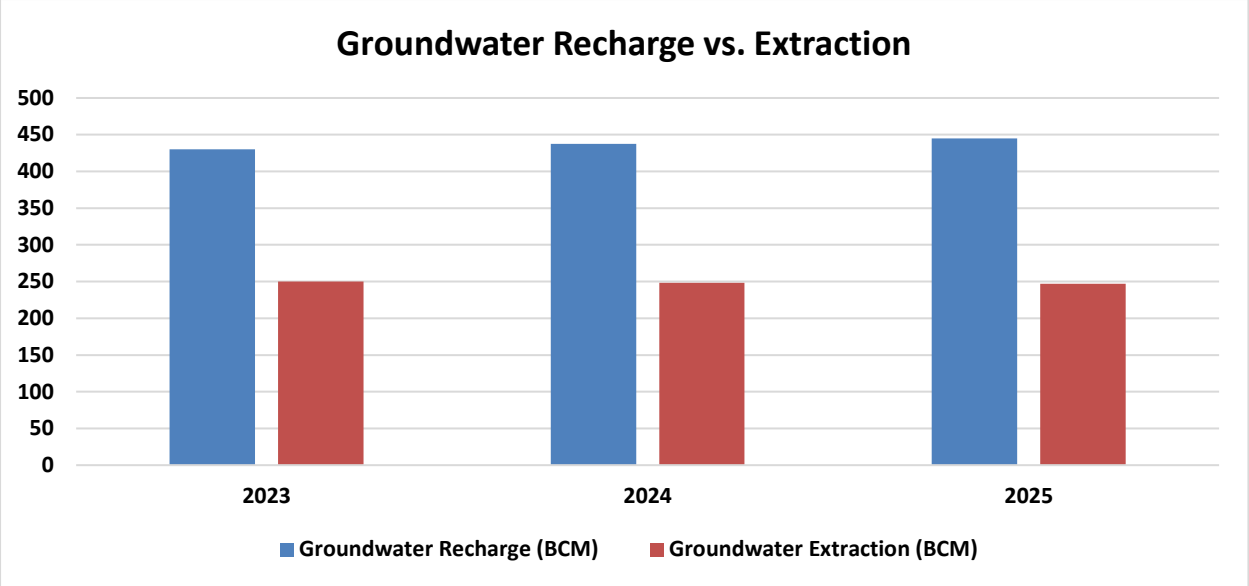

Figure 1: Groundwater Recharge vs. Extraction (BCM, 2023-2025)

Interpretation: Bar graph showing recharge increase from 430 BCM in 2023 to 445 BCM in 2025, extraction decrease from 250 BCM to 247 BCM.

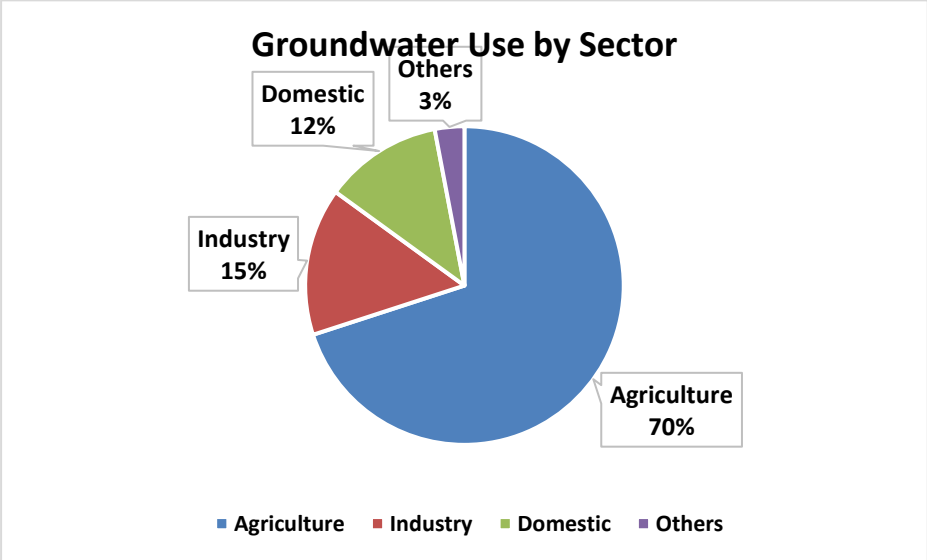

Figure 2: Groundwater Use by Sector (2025)

Interpretation: Pie chart with segments for agriculture (70%), industry (15%), domestic (12%), and others (3%).Awareness levels average 58%, with policymakers leading at 68% and farmers lagging at 45%. Knowledge is slightly lower at 54%, reflecting a need for education. Willingness to adopt sustainable practices stands at 59%, with leaders showing higher intent (65%). Recharge gains and sectoral dominance of agriculture underscore the urgency for integrated action.

6. Findings & Conclusion

India's groundwater reload has risen to 446.90 billion three-dimensional meters (BCM) annually, with extractible resources at 406.19 BCM, while lineage stands at 245.64 BCM, per the modish Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) assessment. Over-exploited blocks have decreased from 23% to 19% since 2023, reflecting gains from initiatives like Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABY). However, contamination affects 20% of samples, with elaborate salinity, fluoride, and nitrate levels in Rajasthan, Haryana, and Gujarat. Agricultural use dominates at 70%, distortion aquifers, while urban over-extraction and industrial pollution exacerbate depletion. Awareness of sustainable practices averages 58%, with policymakers at 68% and farmers at 45%, indicating a literacy gap.

India's groundwater situation remains precarious despite recent progress. The decline in over-exploited areas and increased recharge signal potential, but execration and over-reliance on agriculture pose ongoing threats. Integrated efforts blending technology, policy, and community action are essential to secure water resources by 2030, aligning with the nation's economic goals, amidst climate uncertainties.

7. Recommendations

- Central Ground Water Board (CGWB): assist for strict line caps in over-exploited zones and expand real-time monitoring using IoT, targeting a 10% depression in lineage by 2026.
- Ministry of Jal Shakti: announce nationally acceptation of rainfall harvesting, aiming to add 20 BCM to recharge by 2027, and enforce tiered pricing in urban areas to curb overuse.
- National Water Mission: Launch targeted education campaigns to boost agriculturist awareness to 60% by 2026, focusing on water-efficient crops like millets.
- Tarun Bharat Sangh: Scale traditional johad systems with original mapping, aiming to restore 5% of depleted aquifers in Rajasthan by 2028.
- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO): Enhance aquifer mapping precision with 2025 satellite data, encouraging localised recharge preparation across 10 key states.

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THE SHIVA TRILOGY AND THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES: A CROSS-CULTURAL MYTHIC STUDY

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ABSTRACT: This study explores Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy through the perspective of Joseph Campbell's Monomyth theory, as detailed in his work, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (1949). Campbell's universal framework of the Hero's Journey—comprising the stages of Separation, Initiation, and Return—has been widely applied to various cultural mythologies. However, applying it to a modern Indian popular narrative like Tripathi's trilogy highlights both its strengths and limitations. By aligning Shiva's evolution from a tribal leader in Tibet to the Mahadev of Meluha with Campbell's Monomyth stages, the research reveals archetypal patterns of departure, trials, and apotheosis. Simultaneously, the narrative incorporates distinctively Indian philosophical concepts—dharma, karma, moksha, and Shakti—which challenge Campbell's model and place the story within a uniquely South Asian mythic context. The analysis also emphasizes the gendered aspects of the narrative, particularly the portrayal of Sati, whose active role as a warrior and embodiment of shakti challenges Campbell's male-centered paradigm. A cross-cultural comparison with Western and Near Eastern epics, such as The Odyssey and The Epic of Gilgamesh, highlights both the universality of mythic structures and the cultural specificity of their expression. The paper contends that Tripathi's trilogy both supports and critiques Campbell's Monomyth by embedding the hero's journey within the ethical and spiritual concerns of Indian tradition.

KEYWORDS: Monomyth, Joseph Campbell, Amish Tripathi, Shiva Trilogy, Comparative Mythology, Hero's Journey, Cross-cultural Studies

1. INTRODUCTION

Myth has long served as a reflection of human imagination, offering symbolic narratives that encapsulate the values, fears, and aspirations of civilizations. Across cultures, heroic myths narrate the journey of a figure who leaves the ordinary world, faces trials, and returns transformed, often bringing a boon to the community. Joseph Campbell's seminal work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), synthesized global mythic traditions into a single framework he called the "Monomyth" or Hero's Journey. Campbell posited that myths from vastly different times and places could be interpreted as variations of the same fundamental structure. His model has significantly influenced not only myth criticism but also modern storytelling in literature, film, and popular culture.

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In recent years, Indian popular fiction has seen a resurgence of mythological retellings, as authors revisit classical narratives for contemporary audiences. Among these, Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy* (2010–2013) holds a unique place. Unlike direct retellings of epics like the *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata*, Tripathi humanizes a major deity of Hindu tradition, reimagining Shiva not as an eternal god but as a historical figure whose choices and virtues elevate him to divinity. In doing so, Tripathi democratizes mythology, making it accessible to a new generation of readers. The trilogy's immense popularity, with millions of copies sold, indicates a cultural appetite for narratives that blend tradition with modernity.

Despite its popularity, the *Shiva Trilogy* has received limited in-depth scholarly attention. While critics have explored its role in the revival of Indian myth in mass fiction, few have analyzed its narrative through the lens of comparative mythology. More specifically, the intersection of Tripathi's narrative with Campbell's Monomyth remains underexplored. This paper seeks to fill a gap by conducting a cross-cultural mythic analysis, positioning the trilogy within the larger context of the Hero's Journey while also showcasing how Tripathi both aligns with and deviates from Campbell's model.

The importance of this study is twofold. Firstly, it deepens our comprehension of Tripathi's narrative techniques, illustrating how he balances universal archetypes with culturally specific themes. Secondly, it adds to comparative mythology by evaluating the relevance of Campbell's universalist framework to a modern Indian text. As Dundes points out, myth is both universal and specific, necessitating that scholars consider both shared archetypes and cultural contexts (Dundes 15). Analyzing the *Shiva Trilogy* through Campbell's model thus highlights not only the persistence of the Hero's Journey but also its limitations when applied beyond its mainly Western and classical origins.

This introduction sets the stage for the subsequent analysis. After detailing the methodological framework, the paper will align the Monomyth's stages with the three novels of the trilogy—*The Immortals of Meluha, The Secret of the Nagas, and The Oath of the Vayuputras*. It will then explore the trilogy's gendered archetypes and cultural variations before placing the narrative within a wider cross-cultural context, comparing Shiva's journey with heroes like Odysseus, Gilgamesh, and Luke Skywalker. Finally, the paper will evaluate the impact of Tripathi's myth-making on contemporary Indian popular culture and the study of comparative mythology.

2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The methodological basis of this paper is Joseph Campbell's concept of the Monomyth, as outlined in his influential work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). Campbell, drawing on Jungian archetypes and comparative mythology, proposed that myths from various cultures can be understood through a recurring pattern known as the Hero's Journey. This journey generally unfolds in three main stages: Separation (Departure), where the hero leaves the familiar world; Initiation, where trials, ordeals, and transformations occur; and Return, where the hero re-enters society with newfound wisdom or power. Within these stages, Campbell identifies seventeen sub-stages—such as the Call to Adventure, Supernatural Aid, Road of Trials, Apotheosis, and Return with the Elixir—that collectively trace the path of the archetypal hero.

While Campbell's framework has been influential, it has also faced criticism. Scholars like Segal have argued that its universalist claims risk oversimplifying cultural specifics, while feminist critics highlight its androcentric bias, often sidelining female archetypes. Despite these shortcomings, the Monomyth remains a valuable heuristic tool for analyzing narratives across time and cultural boundaries, especially when applied with an awareness of context.

In applying the Monomyth to Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy*, this paper uses a comparative mythological approach. The goal is not to force the narrative into Campbell's categories but to identify resonances and differences. By mapping Shiva's transformation across the three novels onto the Monomyth, the analysis underscores both universal mythic themes and distinctively Indian

philosophical concepts, such as dharma, karma, and Shakti. Moreover, this framework facilitates a cross-cultural exchange, enabling comparisons between Tripathi's portrayal of Shiva and heroes from other traditions, such as Odysseus, Gilgamesh, and Luke Skywalker.

The approach merges structuralist analysis, which identifies archetypal stages in the trilogy, with contextual reading that considers cultural and philosophical differences. Secondary sources include critical studies on Campbell, research on Indian mythic traditions, and recent literary critiques of Tripathi's works. By synthesizing these viewpoints, the study seeks to offer a nuanced interpretation that positions the *Shiva Trilogy* both within and beyond the Monomyth framework.

3. The Immortals Of Meluha – Separation And The Call To Adventure (Part I)

Amish Tripathi's *The Immortals of Meluha* (2010) lays the narrative groundwork for the trilogy, presenting Shiva not as a deity but as a human tribal leader from Mount Kailash. This reinterpretation aligns with Campbell's idea that the hero often starts in an ordinary world before being called to a greater destiny. Shiva is not inherently divine but becomes so through his journey: a key theme of the Monomyth.

The Call to Adventure

According to Campbell's model, the hero's journey starts with a call that disrupts their normal life. For Shiva, this call comes in the form of an invitation from Meluhan emissaries, who encourage him to relocate with his tribe to Meluha, a highly organized and utopian society. This crossing of borders symbolizes the hero's initial step into the unknown. Similar to Gilgamesh leaving Uruk or Odysseus departing Ithaca, Shiva leaves his homeland to enter a world governed by strict laws, advanced science, and rigid codes of conduct.

The consumption of the Somras, which turns Shiva's throat blue, further cements the call. He is suddenly recognized as the prophesied Neelkanth, the savior meant to free Meluha from its foes, the Chandravanshis. In Campbellian terms, this signifies the hero's supernatural calling—a moment when the ordinary self is redefined by an extraordinary destiny. This transformation is both physical and symbolic, aligning Shiva with archetypal heroes marked by divine signs.

Refusal of the Call and Initial Reluctance

Campbell also notes a stage of hesitation, where the hero resists the daunting path ahead. Shiva's reluctance is evident in his confusion and resistance to being treated as a god-like savior. He is deeply unsettled by the blind faith the Meluhans place in him, expressing doubts about his worthiness and questioning whether destiny alone should define him. This ambivalence reflects Campbell's observation that many heroes initially resist their roles before accepting them—similar to figures like Moses, who doubts his ability to lead, or Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, who hesitates before battle.

Crossing the Threshold

The true crossing of the threshold occurs when Shiva decides to accept his role as Neelkanth. This acceptance is not merely personal but collective, as it ties him to the fate of the Meluhan people. His immersion into Meluha's conflicts—particularly the declaration of war against the Chandravanshis—marks his entry into the world of trials. This stage signifies the transition from an ordinary existence to the liminal zone of heroic testing.

Crossing of the Threshold

Shiva's true crossing of the threshold happens when he embraces his destiny as Neelkanth. This decision is not just a personal one but also a collective commitment, linking him to the destiny of the Meluhan people. His involvement in Meluha's struggles, especially the war declaration against the Chandravanshis, signifies his entry into a realm of challenges. This phase marks his shift from a mundane life to the transitional space of heroic trials.

Supernatural Aid and Mentorship

Campbell suggests that heroes often receive guidance from mentors or supernatural forces. In Shiva's journey, two types of support are apparent. Firstly, the Neelkanth legend itself offers him symbolic strength and legitimacy. Secondly, he receives help from characters like Sati and Brahaspati. Sati, a warrior-princess from Meluha, serves as both a companion and a stabilizing force, representing strength, discipline, and resilience. Brahaspati, the chief scientist, provides intellectual guidance, explaining Meluha's cultural and scientific principles. These characters act as archetypal guides, assisting Shiva as he navigates his new path.

Trials and the Seeds of Transformation

The final chapters of *The Immortals of Meluha* hint at the hero's initiation. Shiva encounters his first significant clash with Meluha's adversaries and wrestles with moral dilemmas. Tripathi adds complexity to the Monomyth: unlike Campbell's clear-cut heroes versus monsters, Shiva begins to perceive moral ambiguity. The realization that the Chandravanshis might not be inherently evil challenges Meluhan beliefs, planting the seeds for his future ethical and philosophical challenges. Thus, *The Immortals of Meluha* aligns with Campbell's Separation phase while incorporating uniquely Indian philosophical elements. Shiva is not just called to adventure; he is urged to question inherited notions of righteousness (dharma) and evil (adharma). This focus on moral decision-making marks the start of his evolution from a tribal leader to Mahadev.

4. The Secret Of The Nagas – The Road Of Trials And The Deepening Of The Hero's Quest (Part II)

While *The Immortals of Meluha* establishes Shiva's role as the chosen Neelkanth, *The Secret of the Nagas* (2011) further develops his transformation through a series of trials, revelations, and encounters with moral intricacies. This stage mirrors Campbell's Initiation, where the hero faces ordeals, gains allies, confronts adversaries, and gradually acquires the wisdom needed for ultimate transformation.

The Road of Trials

Campbell describes the "Road of Trials" as a series of challenges that test the hero's endurance, character, and determination. In *The Secret of the Nagas*, Shiva is plunged into a maze of political intrigue, moral quandaries, and physical battles. He sets out to pursue the Nagas, initially portrayed as monstrous foes responsible for his friend Brahaspati's death. His quest for revenge drives his journey, yet he soon discovers that reality is far more complex than Meluhan ideology had suggested.

The trials Shiva faces are not merely external battles but ethical confrontations with the nature of good and evil. He realizes that the Chandravanshis are not inherently wicked, and similarly, the Nagas—once vilified as deformed demons—are revealed to be a marginalized community suffering under Meluhan oppression. This revelation destabilizes binary notions of morality and forces Shiva into self-reflection. Campbell describes trials as transformative precisely because they deconstruct the hero's initial worldview, pushing him toward deeper understanding. Shiva's growing awareness aligns with this transformative function.

Shiva's challenges are not just physical battles but also moral dilemmas concerning the essence of good and evil. He comes to understand that the Chandravanshis are not innately evil, and the Nagas, once demonized as monstrous beings, are actually an oppressed group suffering under Meluhan rule. This insight disrupts simplistic moral binaries and prompts Shiva to engage in introspection. Campbell notes that trials are transformative because they dismantle the hero's initial beliefs, leading to a deeper comprehension. Shiva's increasing awareness aligns with this transformative aspect.

Meeting with the Goddess

In the Initiation phase, one of Campbell's key archetypes is the "Meeting with the Goddess," representing an encounter with unconditional love, wisdom, or a higher feminine power. In the trilogy, Sati, Shiva's wife and partner, fulfills this role, embodying strength, moral clarity, and resilience. In *The Secret of the Nagas*, her character is further developed as both a warrior and a mother, enhancing her symbolic importance.

Through Sati, Shiva experiences the concept of Shakti feminine energy that complements and sustains masculine action. She is not merely an emotional support but actively influences Shiva's decisions, urging him to adopt compassion and moral responsibility. This balance of masculine and feminine energies reflects Indian philosophical traditions and redefines Campbell's archetype by positioning the Goddess as an active participant rather than a passive symbol.

Atonement with the Father

Campbell's Monomyth also includes the theme of "Atonement with the Father," where the hero reconciles with authority or confronts a powerful paternal figure. In *The Secret of the Nagas,* this archetype appears not as reconciliation with a single father figure, but as Shiva's challenge to the authoritarian structures of Meluhan society. He begins to question the legitimacy of King Daksha and the rigid caste and legal codes that define Meluha.

More significantly, Shiva's realization that the Nagas are victims rather than villains compels him to confront the metaphorical "Father"—the flawed ideology of Meluha that shaped his initial mission. By rejecting blind adherence to inherited narratives, Shiva achieves a symbolic atonement, freeing himself from reliance on patriarchal authority and adopting an independent moral compass.

Apotheosis and the Expansion of Consciousness

As the story unfolds, Shiva undergoes Apotheosis, the expansion of consciousness that Campbell identifies as a hallmark of Initiation. His understanding of good and evil evolves into a recognition of relative morality- what one community sees as good may be viewed as evil by another. This philosophical breakthrough is distinctly Indian, reflecting the pluralism of dharmic traditions.

This stage also involves Shiva's realization of his role not as a conqueror but as a unifier. His growing empathy for the Nagas and his determination to uncover the truth behind Brahaspati's disappearance indicate a shift from vengeance-driven actions to purpose-driven wisdom. Like Campbell's archetypal hero, Shiva transcends narrow definitions of selfhood, aligning himself with universal values of justice and compassion.

The Revelation of the Nagas

The dramatic discovery that the Nagas are actually Sati's long-lost twins and her sister Kali shifts the story into a deeply personal realm. This revelation bridges the gap between myth and reality, presenting the ultimate test of empathy. Shiva's quest transforms from battling abstract foes to dealing with themes of family, identity, and reconciliation.

In this context, Tripathi deviates from Campbell's framework by rooting the mythic elements in familial ties. While Campbell highlights the hero's cosmic importance, Tripathi brings a human touch to Shiva by confronting him with personal emotional trials. This approach supports the trilogy's aim of making the divine relatable, allowing the Neelkanth's challenges to resonate with modern readers.

Initiation in *The Secret of the Nagas*

In the context of Campbell's theory, *The Secret of the Nagas* represents the Initiation phase, where Shiva faces significant challenges that dismantle his previous beliefs. He encounters the Goddess (Sati), rejects Meluhan authority (atonement with the Father), experiences an expansion of moral awareness (Apotheosis), and gains insights that enrich his journey. Tripathi adheres to

Campbell's structure while also innovating, incorporating Indian philosophical and ethical ideas into the universal Hero's Journey.

5. The Oath Of The Vayuputras – The Return, Sacrifice, And Apotheosis Of The Hero (Part III)

If *The Immortals of Meluha* tells the story of Shiva's Separation and The Secret of the Nagas outlines his Initiation, then *The Oath of the Vayuputras* (2013) represents the Return, the final stage of Campbell's Monomyth. This phase involves the hero's apotheosis, facing ultimate challenges, making sacrifices, and eventually reintegrating into the world with transformative wisdom.

The Ultimate Boon and the Burden of Knowledge

Campbell describes the "Ultimate Boon" as the hero's quest achievement—the acquisition of knowledge, power, or an elixir that can restore balance. For Shiva, this boon is not a traditional weapon but a philosophical insight: that evil is not a fixed entity but a dynamic condition that arises when good becomes rigid, stagnant, or oppressive.

This realization is ground breaking within both the fictional world of the trilogy and the mythic framework. Unlike many heroes who return with material treasures or supernatural powers, Shiva brings back ethical wisdom: an understanding of the impermanence of moral categories. This aligns with Campbell's idea that the hero often returns with a truth that revitalizes the community. However, Tripathi adapts this concept, infusing it with an Indian philosophical nuance that reflects the cyclical, rather than linear, nature of dharmic thought.

The Apotheosis of the Hero

In Campbell's model, apotheosis signifies the hero's elevation beyond human limitations into a state of transcendence. In *The Oath of the Vayuputras*, Shiva's apotheosis is paradoxical: he is both exalted as the Neelkanth and simultaneously humanized by grief, loss, and moral burden. The most moving expression of this theme is evident following Sati's tragic demise due to Daksha's betrayal. Unlike conventional epics where the protagonist remains unharmed, Tripathi's portrayal of Shiva is characterized by an irreversible loss. His elevation is found not in triumph but in his ability to endure pain and transform it into a pursuit of justice. This dual process—rising through sorrow—challenges the victorious tendencies of Campbell's framework, anchoring apotheosis in human frailty.

Confrontation and Sacrifice

The trilogy's climax revolves around Shiva's critical choice to use the Pashupatiastra, a devastating weapon, to obliterate the corrupt system based in Devagiri. This decision represents the ultimate test: Shiva must balance the destruction of entire civilizations against the necessity of eliminating deep-rooted evil.

Here, the Monomyth's theme of "Sacrifice" is most vividly realized. By opting to unleash the Pashupatiastra, Shiva embraces not only the immediate devastation but also the enduring duty of reshaping society. His sacrifice is both personal—losing Sati, his partner and stabilizing force—and cosmic, bearing the karmic weight of destruction to enable renewal. Campbell describes the hero's final challenge as a symbolic death leading to rebirth. Shiva's sacrifice embodies this archetype but with an Indian philosophical twist: it aligns with the cyclical concept of srishti (creation), sthiti (preservation), and samhara (destruction), where destruction is a necessary precursor to renewal.

Return with the Elixir

In Campbell's model, the "Return with the Elixir" signifies the hero's reintegration into the ordinary world, equipped with knowledge that benefits the collective. Shiva's return, however, is not a victorious restoration but a somber reintegration marked by grief and responsibility. He retreats to

Kailash with his remaining allies, carrying the understanding that good must continually evolve to prevent becoming evil.

This insight serves as the elixir, redefining the moral compass of the society within the narrative and symbolically offering a lesson for readers in contemporary times. Tripathi ensures that Shiva's journey resonates not just as a mythic spectacle but as ethical guidance for modern societies confronting absolutist ideologies.

The Hero as Human, the Divine as Accessible

Perhaps the most notable contribution of *The Oath of the Vayuputras* to Campbell's framework is its humanization of apotheosis. While Campbell often portrays the hero as semi-divine, Tripathi resists this transcendence. Shiva remains human, susceptible to doubt, anger, grief, and vulnerability. His greatness arises not from supernatural flawlessness but from his capacity to act decisively despite imperfections.

In this regard, Tripathi both aligns with and diverges from Campbell. He aligns in depicting the Monomythic arc of separation, initiation, and return, but diverges by redefining divinity as accessible humanity, thereby situating Campbell's universalist model within Indian cultural and philosophical contexts.

Return in *The Oath of the Vayuputras*

The final book in the series completes Shiva's journey, aligning with Campbell's Return phase: he gains the ultimate boon (ethical wisdom), experiences apotheosis (through grief and endurance), makes the ultimate sacrifice (using the Pashupatiastra), and returns with the elixir (a philosophy of dynamic good). However, Tripathi adapts these archetypes, rooting them in Indian cosmology and humanizing the divine.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper has explored Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy* through the lens of Joseph Campbell's Monomyth, illustrating both the applicability and the limitations of the Hero's Journey framework. By tracing Shiva's transformation across the three novels—*The Immortals of Meluha* (Separation), *The Secret of the Nagas* (Initiation), and *The Oath of the Vayuputras* (Return)—the analysis highlighted the trilogy's resonance with universal mythic patterns while emphasizing its uniquely Indian philosophical nuances.

The first stage, Separation, depicted Shiva's call to adventure, his hesitant acceptance of the role of the Neelkanth, and his crossing into a realm where myth, politics, and destiny intersect. The second stage, Initiation, placed Shiva in a maze of trials, moral complexities, and revelations, culminating in the understanding that evil is a fluid condition rather than a fixed adversary. The third stage, Return, illustrated Shiva's apotheosis through grief, his sacrifice in deploying the Pashupatiastra, and his final reintegration into society with the elixir of wisdom: the necessity for constant moral renewal.

While Campbell's framework sheds light on these stages, Tripathi's narrative also challenges and expands it. By grounding the hero's journey in Indian concepts of dharma, karma, and shakti, Tripathi critiques the linearity and androcentric bias of Campbell's model. Most significantly, he humanizes divinity, presenting Shiva not as an inaccessible god but as a flawed, grieving, yet determined leader. This reconfiguration underscores that true heroism lies not in invulnerability but in the courage to act amidst imperfection and loss.

Thus, the *Shiva Trilogy* becomes a site of cross-cultural mythmaking: it affirms the universality of archetypal structures while simultaneously provincializing them through the lens of Indian philosophy. In doing so, Tripathi creates a narrative that speaks both to global readers familiar with Campbell's Monomyth and to Indian audiences rooted in dharmic traditions. Ultimately, this

synthesis of the universal and the particular reflects the enduring relevance of myth in contemporary literature, as well as its capacity to continually reinvent itself across cultures and epochs.

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OPINION OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS OF MALDA DISTRICT ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF MOOCS

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ABSTRACT: Education has evolved significantly from traditional classroom-based teaching to technology-driven learning models. Structured Conventional education often led to learner's fatigue, disengagement, and limited accessibility. With the emergence of digital technologies, learning has become more flexible, learner-centered, and globally accessible. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), originating from the Open Educational Resources (OER) movement and gaining prominence in 2012, have emerged as a revolutionary model of e-learning. MOOCs provide open, affordable, and lifelong learning opportunities without the constraints of age, eligibility, or geography. They emphasize skill development, self-directed learning, and digital collaboration, enabling learners to access quality education at scale. The two major forms—cMOOCs, which focus on connectivism and interaction, and xMOOCs, which emphasize structured content delivery—cater to diverse learner needs. This study, entitled "Opinion of Higher Education Students of Malda District about the Prospects of MOOCs", investigates learners' awareness, perceptions, and attitudes towards MOOCs in the higher education sector. The findings aim to highlight the opportunities and challenges of adopting MOOCs as a complementary model to traditional learning.

KEYWORDS: MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), E-learning, Higher Education, Distance Learning, Lifelong Learning, Student Perception

1. INTRODUCTION

The word MOOC was created in 2008 by a well-known course called Connectivism and Connective knowledge through Professor Dave Cornier of 'Prince Edward Island University'.

A Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) is a recent and widely researched development in Distance Education, which provide a web-based platform in the form of e-learning with a huge number of students and also give opportunity in distance education all over the world. It was established in 2006 and developed through as per the modern changes in online education, distance education and e-learning but in the case of learning it got popular in 2012.

In 2001, MOOCs was first derived from the Open Educational Resources (OER) movement generally created by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Open Courseware (MIT OCW) project. It

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disclosed all the educational materials with highly standard quality by the highly educated teachers from different largest universities at a certain period of time.

1.1. Concept of MOOCS

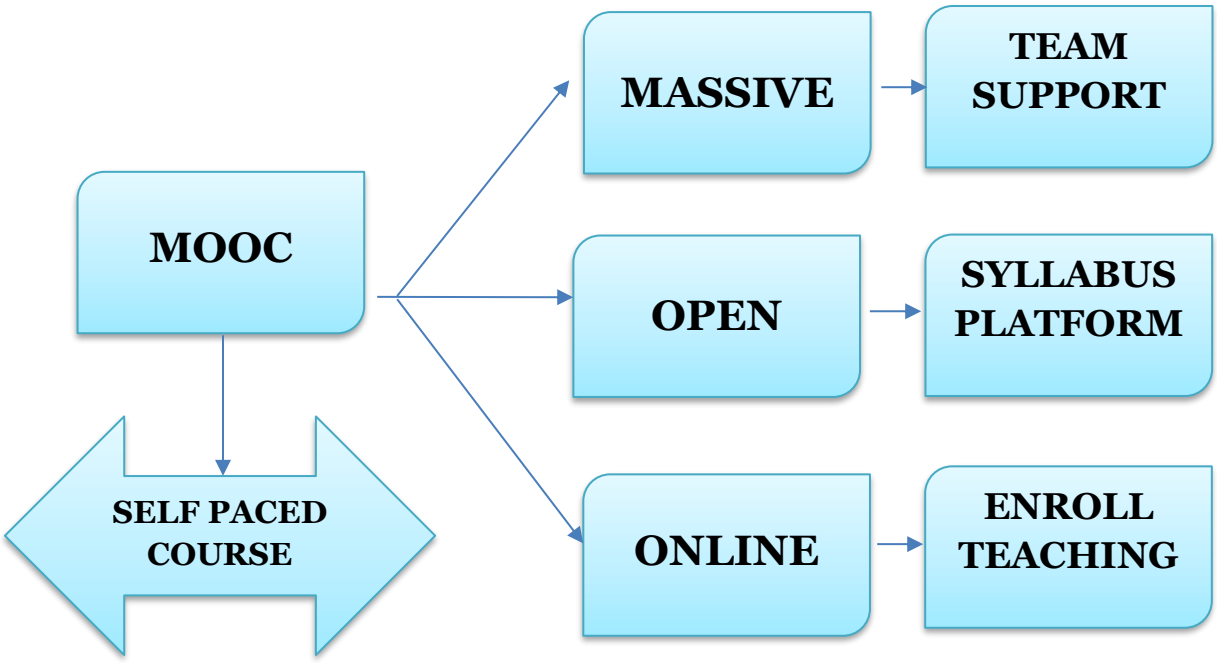

Figure 1: Concept of MOOCs

MOOC is a knowledge-based Web, which emphasizes on transmission of practical knowledge rather than traditional memorization or rote learning among students, means it focuses to create expertise on a particular subject without any eligibility criteria. MOOCs are a modern kind of web based educational agent that created for the purpose to teach and educate a large number of students together. It provides an advanced learning environment by implementing interaction online through a large scale of participants via the web. It is a lifelong educational approach with the option of free of cost, open registration, an open accessible curriculum which anyone can access in anytime and open-ended outcomes which helps to integrate the whole educational system within one forum.
At first, there was all information's related to the course open access to MOOC and the researchers, specialists as well as learners could correction, add and improve it according to recent development. But present developed MOOC create some strict regulations and prescribe that the materials and information is free or open accessible for all but it can't use anywhere else.

1.2. The purposes of MOOCS

- To make a course easily accessible for human being without any gender biases.
- To create a course as per participant interest without expects any eligibility criteria.
- To provide knowledge for the purpose to make more experienced person via web.
- To generate e-learning motive among the learner.
- To impart teaching in an open environment without any barrier of bounded classroom.
- To develop the traditional distance learning style.
- To implement lifelong learning process.

1.3. Who are participators in these MOOCs?

MOOCs has been try to spread the work into different sector of our education. Although its importance is immensive in different cases yet it is discussed for those who have opened than.

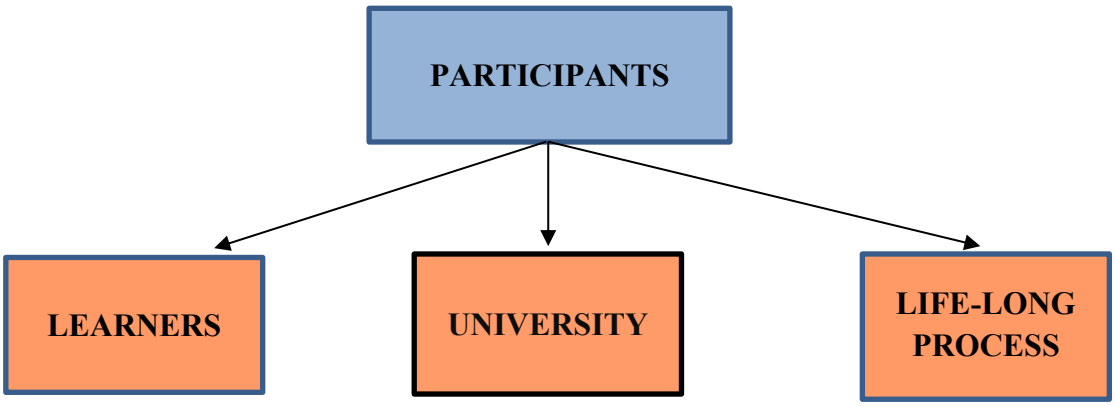

Figure 2: MOOCs Participants

1.4. Characteristics of MOOCS

- **MOOCs is a massive course**, means large number of students involve here without any perquisite of number, eligibility, gender, age, time, classroom criteria for fulfilment of this course.The participants are independently work as per their own pace of learning. The most interesting thing about MOOC is a greater part of people can participate in it by following system approach **(Input – Process – Output – Feedback)** and take free education according to their own current need as well as desires.
- **MOOCs is also called open course**, means there are no restriction of any rules, regulation as bounded classroom. Here open refers to only free accessible without any paying, means anyone and any time access the material but cannot copy, use and publish the course material online or any other site. It is a openlydistributed knowledge base an event including authentic networking and also the remembering part of this sector is, it is largernon-profitable organisation.
- **MOOCs is an online course**, means deliver the materials or information throughthe internet. It also refers to "content distribution course"cause the contents of these course is open ended. That's why nowadays we can say that we have a personalized online course as per desired of the learner. In other side we can't called this course as only online course it is a highly connective and collaborative learning process.

1.5. Types of MOOCs

Generally, two types of MOOCs based on their divergent pedagogies -

- **First one is cMOOCs,** which refers to connectivism and connective knowledge, means it emphasizes on interaction among large group of participants and executes proper connectivity among them. The main objectives of cMOOCs, is to provide and enhance learning environment by implementing mutual interaction among a large number of participants through online tools.Generally, cMOOCsalso popular as CCK08 because it's establishment in 2008 by*Dave Cormier.* CCK08 focus on education and effective learning, and serve learning ingredients by following digital storytelling method.
- **Second one is xMOOCs,** which refers to "artificial intelligence" (AI) through which a number of innovative courses are flourished. It created in 2011 by ***Peter Norvig*** and ***Sebastien Thruen.*** It is composed for the purpose to provide the opportunity to reach MOOCs among the larger population groups. According to *Stephen Downes* the 'x' refers to the 'eXtension to traditional teaching.'in xMOOCs the motive of learning and acquisition is predetermined by MOOCs creators.

2. Objectives Of The Study

- To gather the opinion of higher education students about prospects of MOOCs.
- To explore strata wise deference opinion of higher education students in Malda districts.

- To find it any significant deference between rural and urban groups.

3. Hypotheses Of The Study

$Ho._1$: There exists no significant difference between the means scores of the male students and the female students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs

$Ho._2$: There exists no significant difference between the means scores of the rural students and the urban students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs.

$Ho._3$: There exists no significant difference between the means scores of the college students and the university students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs.

4. Methodology Of The Study

4.1. Population of the study:

The researcher selected high students of Malda district as his research population and in this district; he selected both college in University students for his sample.

4.2. Sample of the study:

The researcher has selected a special sampling technique for carrying out the study. In this study the researcher applied judgmental or purposive sampling technique as a non-probability sampling technique. The data investigation at first selected one area for applying the test for pilot testing, secondly, he selected one rural area and one urban area. Finally, data were collected from the selected students. After that pilot testing and standardization of the final and data were collected. Total sample is 200 students.

4.3. Variable of the study:

The variables have included in the study –

i. Opinion about prospects of MOOCs

4.5. Method of the study: - As per the above discussion, the present research type is descriptive; because in this research survey method was used for data collection and this research method followed the steps of descriptive research.

4.6. Construction of tool: - For measuring the Opinion about prospects of MOOCs of higher-level students, the researcher developed an opinionnaire.

4.7. Dimensions: - In this study, the researcher selected four dimensions to constructing the research tool. These dimensions are Massive, Open, Online, Self-oriented course.

4.8. Drafting of items:-The researcher prepared 30 items for this study which are 27 positive items and 3 negative items. The scale consists of 30 questions under the above 4 dimensions. There are 27 positive items and 3 negative items. Each item in the Opinion about prospects of MOOCs measure scale is provided two possible alternative responses such as ‘agree’, and ‘disagree’.

5. Analysis And Interpretation

The researcher computed different types of descriptive statistics for conclusion about the nature of the distribution. Mean, Median, Mode, and Standard Deviation were computed for the present study. The computed values were presented below in the following table –

Table-1: Category & Score Category

Category	Score Category	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
Male Students	Opinion about MOOCs	52.05	53	54.2	3.78
Female Students	Opinion about MOOCs	52.88	53.5	54.74	3.46

University Students	Opinion about MOOCs	52.44	53.2	54.72	3.59
College Students	Opinion about MOOCs	55.25	55.4	55.7	1.91
Urban Students	Opinion about MOOCs	53.85	55	57.5	3.37
Rural Students	Opinion about MOOCs	52.48	52	51.04	3.11

5.1. Testing of hypotheses

- **Null Hypotheses1**

There exists no significant difference between the means scores of the male students and the female students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs.

Table-2: The means scores of the male students and the female students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs

Sample group	Mean	SD	Number	Mean difference	S_{ED}	t	df	Level of significance		Result
Male students	52.05	3.78	90	0.78	0.51	0.10	198	0.01	0.5	Insignificant
Female Students	52.88	3.46	110					1.97	2.59	

Here the computed "t" is 0.10 and the df is 198.The table value at 0.05 is 1.91 and 0.01 level is 2.59. The computed value is smaller than the table value. It is insignificant in both levels. So, the null hypothesis is accepted.

- **Null Hypotheses 2**

There exists no significant difference between the means scores of the rural students and the urban students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs.

Table-3: The means scores of the rural students and the urban students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs.

Sample group	Mean	SD	Number	Mean difference	S_{ED}	t	df	Level of significance		Result
Urban students	53.85	3.37	41	1.37	0.73	1.88	81	0.01	0.05	Insignificant
Rural Students	52.48	3.11	42					2.63	1.99	

Here the computed't' is 1.88 and the df is 81. The table value at 0.05 is 1.99 and 0.01 level are 2.63. The computed value is smaller than the table value. It is insignificant in both levels. So, the null hypotheses are accepted.

- **Null Hypotheses 3**

There exists no significant difference between the means scores of the Rural students and the Urban students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs

Table-4: The means scores of the Rural students and the Urban students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs

Sample group	Mean	SD	Number	Mean difference	S_{ED}	t	df	Level of significance		Result
University students	52.44	3.59	188	2.81	0.6	4.68	198	0.01	0.5	Significant
College Students	55.25	1.91	12					2.60	1.97	

Here the computed‘t’ is 4.68 and the df is 198. The table value at 0.05 is 1.97 and 0.01 level are 2.60. The computed value is greater than the table value. It is Significant in both levels. So, the null hypotheses are **Rejected.**

6. Discussion And Conclusion

In the Table mentioned above, the researcher discussed, analysed, interprets and explained the collected data. After completing this process, the researcher concluded a conclusion and discussed the main findings of the study, limitation of the study, educational implications of the study, future needed of the study and at last he gave overall summary of the whole research study.

6.1. Main findings of the study:

- There exists no significant difference between the means scores of the male students and the female students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs.
- There exists no significant difference between the means scores of the rural students and the urban students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs.
- There exists significant difference between the means scores of the college students and the university students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs.

6.2. Educational implications of the study:

Basically, the researcher whole research work and selected topic related to the higher education studies and e-learning. Nevertheless, there are some important aspect as well as educational implications of this research work, which are highlighted below –

- This study will help to spread the awareness about MOOCs.
- This investigation helps to find out current position of higher education in MOOCs and encourage students to attract in this educational course.
- This study helps to gather information in regard to present status of students’ outlook concerning MOOCs.
- This study will help learners to identify as well as collect the available and free educational resources.
- This research work in also helpful for those people who are wanted to afresh start and connect with higher education sector as per their choice, need and time.

7. Conclusion Of The Study

Through this study we understand about MOOCs and their different kinds of prospects. In MOOCs, there are three prospects such as massive, open and online as well as which also helps to know about how to learn in an e-learning or web base technique. Generally, MOOCs refers to modern technology innovative course that designed for large number of participants that can be accessed by anyone anywhere as long as they have internet connection, are open to everyone without entry qualification, and offer a complete course experience online for free.

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AWARENESS AND USAGE OF SWAYAM COURSES AMONG COLLEGE TEACHERS: A STUDY IN JAGTIAL AND KARIMNAGAR, TELANGANA

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ABSTRACT: In the last couple of years, the outbreak of Corona virus shook the whole world. It has affected people irrespective of their nationality, level of education, income or gender. It has affected most of the sectors especially education sector. Covid-19 brought out a drastic change in the education system. Universities across India and around the globe shifted to the virtual classes closing physical classrooms. In this arrangement, both teaching and learning happen through electronic devices which are relatively new to the entire teaching-learning community. This study aimed to understand how SWAYAM Courses which are online had fared for the teachers in Jagtial and Karimnagar, Telangana. Besides, it tried to understand the users' experience and the reasons for not completing the courses they enrolled in. The data is collected through convenient sampling and is analyzed by using SPSS 26 version.

KEYWORDS: SWAYAM Courses, MOOCs, Virtual Classroom

1. INTRODUCTION

During and after COVID-19 pandemic situation, educational system in India and abroad has changed drastically. The use of virtual platforms, online classes and educational boards for teaching and learning became mandatory. The traditional learning methods are replaced by online education due to spread of COVID 19. The factors like closure of institutes and pressure to complete the prescribed syllabus in a stipulated time with the academic calendar, promotion to next class, continuing the education, examination and results forced the educational institutions to abandon their concerns and compelled them to adopt online education.

It was for the first time in India online classes have been conducted on this massive scale. The commencement of online classes and courses began. The only thing required is availability of Internet and a computer system for both teaching and learning communities.

India has come out with a massive open online course (MOOC) which is a model for delivering learning content online to any person who wants to take a course, with no limit on attendance. The courses are free and available for anyone to enroll, provide an affordable and flexible way to learn new skills, advance one's career and deliver quality educational experiences at scale. The other benefits are that one can learn from friends through a social networking site, availability of materials advocated by top professors, can learn different languages etc.

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A virtual classroom is a learning environment wherein the student work on his/her own time each week to complete learning activities and assignments by their due dates. The students engage with the lesson material online. It is a set up where the information is conveyed through voice or video conferencing with several participants and instructors connected to the same chat interface.

One such Indian Massive open online course (MOOC) platform is SWAYAM. It means 'Self' in Sanskrit. It is an acronym which stands for "Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds". SWAYAM is offering over 2253 courses taught by close to 1,300 instructors from over 203 Indian universities. It allows students in India to earn academic credit online.

2. Literature Review

(i) Deepika Nambiar in her survey on online v/s classroom mode found that "87.1% of the students reported that they preferred classroom teaching methods more than online teaching mode, 12.9% preferred online classes". The drawbacks of online classes such as internet connectivity, supply of power etc might have been the factors for such a conclusion.

(ii) A Subaveerapandiyan & Fakrudhin Ali Ahamed in their paper titled "Awareness and usage of SWAYAM courses among Library and information science students-A survey" stated that majority respondents are aware of SWAYAM course through their teachers. They also found that the students involved themselves to enrich their knowledge with the support of the SWAYAM course.

(iii) K.Sathish Kumar & Dr. M . Mahendraprabu in their paper titled "Awareness of swayam programme among the Postgraduate students" concluded that "UGC feels that Universities can play a pivotal role in disseminating and popularizing the SWAYAM courses amongst its students in particular and the academic fraternity at large, thereby enabling a bigger and wider access to students avail the benefit of MOOCs. To take the SWAYAM initiative forward and encourage more and more HEIs to adopt the MOOCs courses on SWAYAM, the university nominated SWAYAM coordinators would act as a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for their university."

3. Objectives Of The Study

(i) To find out the awareness of SWAYAM Course.
(ii) To find out the faculty registering in SWAYAM Course.
(iii) To find out the problems faced by college teachers while pursuing the courses.
(iv) To find out the learning outcome of the college teachers through SWAYAM Courses.

4. Limitations Of The Study

The present study is limited to selective areas- Jagtial & Karimnagar. Due to lack of time and money, the sample survey was limited to college teachers of these two areas only.

5. Research Methodology

The data is collected through two sources- Primary & Secondary. The primary data is collected through structured questionnaire using convenient sampling method. The data so collected is analyzed using SPSS 26 version.

6. Data Analysis & Interpretation

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table -1: Designation of the respondents

Designation					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Assistant Professor	32	25.4	25.4	25.4

	Associate Professor	26	20.6	20.6	46.0
	Professor	19	15.1	15.1	61.1
	Contract	41	32.5	32.5	93.7
	Guest	8	6.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents are contract faculty i.e. 32.5 percent followed by Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, Professors and Guest faculty. This data shows that teaching & learning process is carried mostly by contract faculty whether Government institutions or private institutions in Jagtial and Karimnagar. There is a scope for recruitment drives for faculty here.

Table-2: Age of the respondents

Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-25Years	12	9.5	9.5	9.5
	26-30 Years	73	57.9	57.9	67.5
	31-40 Years	27	21.4	21.4	88.9
	above 40 Years	14	11.1	11.1	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the faculty are between 26-30 years of age followed by 31-40 years, above 40 years and lastly 20-25 years of age. This data shows that adults and middle aged adults are more in these areas and are interested in teaching field.

Table-3: Monthly Income of the respondents

Monthly Income					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	less Than 20000	12	9.5	9.5	9.5
	20000-30000	59	46.8	46.8	56.3
	30001-40000	33	26.2	26.2	82.5
	Above 40000	22	17.5	17.5	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents are earning between Rs. 20000-30000 per month followed by Rs.30001-40000, Above Rs.40000 and lastly less than Rs.20000. This data shows that most of the respondents are having average quality of life in these areas.

Table-4: Marital Status of the respondents

Marital Status					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	NEVER MARRIED	15	11.9	11.9	11.9
	CURRENTLY MARRIED	78	61.9	61.9	73.8
	SEPARATED/DIVORCED	20	15.9	15.9	89.7
	WIDOWED	13	10.3	10.3	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents are married followed by separated, never married and lastly widowed. The data shows that married may or may not show a higher level of job dedication than those who are unmarried or widowed or separated. The marriage increases the responsibility of one's family, off-the-job commitment, and loyalty.

Table-5: Gender Ratio of the respondents

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	72	57.1	57.1	57.1
	Female	52	41.3	41.3	98.4
	Prefer not to say	2	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents are male followed by female and lastly those who preferred not to reveal their gender. The data shows that the population of male in these areas in general and in teaching and learning in particular is more.

Table-6: Educational Qualifications of the respondents

Educational Qualifications					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	POST GRADUATION	55	43.7	43.7	43.7
	M.Phil	44	34.9	34.9	78.6
	Ph.D	27	21.4	21.4	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents are post graduates, followed by Masters in Philosophy and lastly doctorates. This data shows that post graduates usually have a specific career goal in their mind and therefore they may choose teaching as a more general sense of the need to become as 'employable' as possible till their goal is reached. There is every possibility that they have chosen this profession not by choice but by chance.

Table-7: Awareness about SWAYAM of the respondents

Awareness of SWAYAM Massive Open Online platform					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	90	71.4	71.4	71.4
	No	36	28.6	28.6	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents knew about Massive Open Online platform called SWAYAM. They knew the benefits of MOOCs such as attending courses virtually taught by the best faculty and earning credits which are transferable in any Indian University/Institute.

Table-8: Working Sector of the respondents

Sector					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Government	53	42.1	42.1	42.1
	Private	73	57.9	57.9	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents are working in private institutions. The data shows that many faculties are working in private institutions. They may undergo stress of working overtime, fulfilling targets sets by their employer which has no rational basis and they may always get scolded for no fault of them.

Table-9: No. of respondents working in various colleges

Working in Colleges					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Degree	70	55.6	55.6	55.6
	Post Graduate	16	12.7	12.7	68.3
	Engineering	21	16.7	16.7	84.9
	other	19	15.1	15.1	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents are working in degree colleges followed by Engineering colleges, other like B.Ed., Medical etc. and lastly post graduate colleges. The data shows that degree colleges are good in number.

Table-10: No. of respondents teaching in which streams

Stream					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Science	22	17.5	17.5	17.5
	Commerce	58	46.0	46.0	63.5
	Arts	23	18.3	18.3	81.7
	Other	23	18.3	18.3	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents are faculty in Commerce subject followed by Arts & others and lastly science subject. The data shows that commerce subject is the most opted subject in these areas.

Table-11: From where respondents came to know about SWAYAM Courses

From where you came to know about SWAYAM Courses					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Institute	23	18.3	18.3	18.3
	Library	53	42.1	42.1	60.3
	Social Media	15	11.9	11.9	72.2
	Faculty Members	17	13.5	13.5	85.7
	Friends	8	6.3	6.3	92.1
	WEBSITES	5	4.0	4.0	96.0
	Other:	5	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents came to know about SWAYAM courses from their college libraries followed by Institutes, faculty members, friends, Social Media, Websites and other. The data shows that faculty visits libraries as they provide physical (hard copies) or digital access (soft copies) materials.

Table-12: Whether the respondents registered in SWAYAM Massive Open Online courses

Have you registered in SWAYAM Massive Open Online courses					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	30	23.8	23.8	23.8
	No	74	58.7	58.7	82.5
	Maybe	22	26.5	26.5	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents have not registered in SWAYAM Massive Open Online courses. The reason might be the availability of limited number of courses of limited Universities.

Table-13: In how many courses have respondents been enrolled in till date?

How many courses have you been enrolled in till date					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	54	42.9	42.9	42.9
	1	48	38.1	38.1	81.0
	2	17	13.5	13.5	94.4
	3	7	5.6	5.6	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents have not enrolled in any course followed by one course, two courses and lastly very few in three courses. The reason might be the availability of limited number of courses of limited Universities.

Table-14: How many courses have been completed by respondents till date?

How many courses have you COMPLETED till date					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	75	59.5	59.5	59.5
	1	38	30.2	30.2	89.7
	2	8	6.3	6.3	96.0
	3	5	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents has not completed the courses they have enrolled. One course is completed by 30.2 percent of faculty, two courses by just 8 faculties and only five faculties have completed three courses till date.

Table-15: $Reasons for enrolment Frequencies

$Reasons for enrolment Frequencies				
		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
$Reasons for enrolment[a]	Learning new skills	102	21.9%	100.0%
	For gaining knowledge	57	12.3%	55.9%
	Orientation for CAS purpose	102	21.9%	100.0%
	Refresher for CAS purpose	102	21.9%	100.0%
	FDP for CAS purpose	102	21.9%	100.0%
Total		465	100.0%	455.9%
a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.				

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents have enrolled and completed the courses for Learning new skills, as Orientation for CAS purpose, as Refresher for CAS purpose and as FDP for CAS purpose and very few for gaining knowledge. If the conditions to fulfill courses for Career Advancement Schemes were not there, they would not have chosen these courses.

Table-16: $Reasons for not completing Frequencies

$Reasons for not completing Frequencies				
		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Reasons for not completing	Courses are not interesting	102	16.8%	81.0%
	Technical problem	55	9.1%	43.7%
	Language problem	104	17.2%	82.5%
	Some courses are pending	102	16.8%	81.0%
	Not aware about courses	99	16.3%	78.6%
	Other:	71	11.7%	56.3%
Total		679	100.0%	481.0%
a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.				

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents did not complete the course they enrolled because of language problem. Few faculty states that the Courses are not interesting and some courses are pending. Few faculties stated that they are not aware about courses. Few faculties stated that they face technical problem.

Table 17: Whether Respondents University organized an orientation program about SWAYAM

Has Your University organized an orientation program about SWAYAM					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	59	46.8	46.8	46.8
	No	67	53.2	53.2	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents stated that their University to which their colleges are affiliated did not organize an orientation program about SWAYAM.

Table 18: Whether the respondents need any awareness program regarding SWAYAM Courses?

Do you need any awareness program regarding SWAYAM Courses					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	49	38.9	38.9	38.9
	No	51	40.5	40.5	79.4
	Maybe	26	20.6	20.6	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents stated that they do not need any awareness program regarding SWAYAM Courses.

Table 19: Whether the respondents attended the mock test and submitted assignment every week?

Have you attended the mock test and submitted assignment every week					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	63	50.0	50.0	50.0
	No	63	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that equal number of the respondents stated that they did and they did not attend the mock test and did not submit assignment every week

Table 20: $Reasons for not attending tests Frequencies

$Reasons for not attending tests Frequencies				
		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Reasons for not attending Tests[a]	Lack of time	106	23.3%	84.1%
	No support from the University	106	23.3%	84.1%
	Heavy class routine	106	23.3%	84.1%
	Due to lack of systems	68	15.0%	54.0%
	Other:	68	15.0%	54.0%
Total		454	100.0%	360.3%
a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.				

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents stated that they did not attend tests because of lack of time, no support from the University and heavy class routine. They also stated that Due to lack of systems and other reasons that they could not attend the tests.

Table 21: $Problems encountered Frequencies

$Problems encountered Frequencies				
		Responses		Percent
		N	Percent	of Cases
Problems encountered	Poor audio/video quality	106	23.1%	84.1%
	Ineffective discussion forums	106	23.1%	84.1%
	Lack of time	106	23.1%	84.1%
	Slow internet connection /technical problems	70	15.3%	55.6%
	None of these	70	15.3%	55.6%
Total		458	100.0%	363.5%
a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.				

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents stated that the problems like Poor audio/video quality, Ineffective discussion forums and Lack of time made them not to enroll or complete the courses. Slow internet connection /technical problems are another problem faced by them.

Table 22: $Problems encountered Frequencies

$Resources used Frequencies				
		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Resources Used	Open Access Resources	103	31.7%	81.7%
	Books	103	31.7%	81.7%
	Journal Articles	58	17.8%	46.0%
	E-Databases	61	18.8%	48.4%
Total		325	100.0%	257.9%
a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.				

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents stated that they used Open Access Resources and Books for completion of the enrolled courses. They also used e-databases and Journals/Articles.

Table 23: Whether the respondents used electronics devices for submitting an assignment

Electronic Devices Used for submitting an assignment					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Desktop	55	43.7	43.7	43.7

	Laptop	36	28.6	28.6	72.2
	Mobile	21	16.7	16.7	88.9
	Tab	14	11.1	11.1	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents stated that they used desktops for submitting an assignment. They used laptops, mobiles and tabs respectively for submitting an assignment.

Table 24: Average time spend on the courses weekly by the respondents

Average time spending on the courses weekly					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 1 Hour	51	40.5	40.5	40.5
	1 HOUR -3 HOURS	43	34.1	34.1	74.6
	3 HOURS TO 5 HOURS	19	15.1	15.1	89.7
	ABOVE 5 HOURS	13	10.3	10.3	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents stated that the average time spent on the courses weekly is Less than 1 Hour only. Few of them spent 1 HOUR -3 HOURS, 3 HOURS TO 5 HOURS and ABOVE 5 HOURS respectively.

Table 25: Average time spend on the courses weekly by the respondents

Have you withdrawn courses during their course period					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-2 weeks	35	27.8	27.8	27.8
	3-4 weeks	53	42.1	42.1	69.8
	5-6 weeks	10	7.9	7.9	77.8
	>6 weeks	16	12.7	12.7	90.5
	missing	12	9.5	9.5	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents stated that they had withdrawn the enrolled courses after 3-4 weeks. Few of them had withdrawn the course after 1-2 weeks, above 6 weeks and 5-6 weeks respectively.

Table 26: $Reasons for withdrawing Frequencies

$Reasons for withdrawing Frequencies				
		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Reasons for withdrawing	Personal	103	21.9%	100.0%
	Not very useful	59	12.5%	57.3%
	No time	103	21.9%	100.0%
	No assistance from the university	103	21.9%	100.0%
	Other	103	21.9%	100.0%
Total		471	100.0%	457.3%
a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.				

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents stated that they had withdrawn the course for the reasons like Personal, No time, No assistance from the university and Other reasons respectively. Few of them had withdrawn as they felt that it is not useful.

Table 27: Respondents Satisfaction level of SWAYAM Teaching Methods

Satisfaction level of SWAYAM Teaching Methods					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Highly Dissatisfied	20	15.9	15.9	15.9
	Dissatisfied	26	20.6	20.6	36.5
	Neutral	39	31.0	31.0	67.5
	Satisfied	21	16.7	16.7	84.1
	Highly Satisfied	20	15.9	15.9	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is observed that majority of the respondents stated that neither they are satisfied nor dissatisfied with Teaching Methods of SWAYAM. Around 20.6 percent are dissatisfied with Teaching Methods of SWAYAM and 16.7 percent are satisfied with Teaching Methods of SWAYAM.

7. Findings And Conclusion

i. Teaching & learning process is carried mostly by contract faculty whether Government institutions or private institutions in Jagtial and Karimnagar.

ii. Adults and middle aged adults are more in these areas and are interested in teaching field.

iii. Majority of the faculty are between 26-30 years of age followed by 31-40 years, above 40 years and lastly 20-25 years of age.

iv. Majority of the respondents are earning between Rs. 20000-30000 per month.

v. Majority of the respondents are married.

vi. Majority of the respondents are male.

vii. Majority of the respondents are post graduates.

viii. Majority of the respondents knew about Massive Open Online platform called SWAYAM.

ix. Majority of the respondents are working in private institutions.

x. Majority of the respondents are faculty in Commerce subject.

xi. Majority of the respondents came to know about SWAYAM courses from their college libraries.

xii. Majority of the respondents have not registered and had not enrolled in SWAYAM Massive Open Online courses.

xiii. Majority of the respondents stated that their University to which their colleges are affiliated did not organize an orientation program about SWAYAM.

xiv. Majority of the respondents stated that they do not need any awareness program regarding SWAYAM Courses.

xv. Equal number of the respondents stated that they did and they did not attend the mock test and did not submit assignment every week.

xvi. Majority of the respondents stated that they did not attend tests because of lack of time, no support from the University and heavy class routine.

xvii. Majority of the respondents stated that the problems like Poor audio/video quality, Ineffective discussion forums and Lack of time made them not to enroll or complete the courses.

xviii. Majority of the respondents stated that they used Open Access Resources and Books for completion of the enrolled courses.

xix. Majority of the respondents stated that they used desktops for submitting an assignment.

xx. Majority of the respondents stated that the average time spent on the courses weekly is Less than 1 Hour only.

xxi. Majority of the respondents stated that they had withdrawn the enrolled courses after 3-4 weeks.

xxii. Majority of the respondents stated that they had withdrawn the course for the reasons like Personal, No time, No assistance from the university and other reasons respectively.

xxiii. Majority of the respondents stated that neither they are satisfied nor dissatisfied with Teaching Methods of SWAYAM.

8. Conclusion

Indian Government launched SWAYAM on 9th July, 2017, six years back from today, designed it to achieve the three cardinal principles of Education Policy viz., access, equity and quality. SWAYAM platform aimed at providing quality education to large number of students pursuing higher education in our Universities and Colleges. The study shows that college teachers know about it but did not register and enrolled for any course. If this is the situation with college teachers, how will they be able to guide the students unless and until they complete a course to know the benefits or limitations of the course? The MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) courses on SWAYAM aimed at benefitting lifelong learners, students, teachers, researchers to use multimedia on anytime, anywhere basis for acquiring knowledge and skills. Universities should conduct awareness programmes in popularizing the SWAYAM courses amongst its teachers first so that they can in turn popularize among their students. They should make their nominated SWAYAM coordinators to act immediately. The University should make it compulsory for the faculty, regular, contract, and guest whether in Government Sector or Private sector to complete a SWAYAM course so as to get any academic benefits from them.

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CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC POLICY RESPONSE: AN ANALYTICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT: Climate change is increasingly becoming a threat faced globally by challenging stability of economies, social fairness, and environmental sustainability. In reaction, governments and international organizations have established a series of economic policy instruments with the view of mitigation and adaptation. This review compiles available data regarding various instruments crucial to any economy, such as carbon taxes, trading emissions systems, climate finance mechanisms, and innovation incentives - their effectiveness, equity impacts, and challenges of implementation. Studies across different parts of the world identify that carbon pricing systems that are properly designed have the potential to cut emissions without hampering economic growth, particularly when the proceeds are recycled back into the community, and benefited by the low-income citizens. Moreover, it is revealed that investment by the government in green technologies and robust infrastructure can provide a good level of economic returns and long-term growth. Nevertheless, the reaction to these developments on the global scale is still disjointed, and the most significant issues that await solutions are poor financing of the climate change issues, lack of policy consistency, and unfair availability of adaptation funds. The paper summarizes and suggests a combination of a less siloed, fair and evidence-based approach to secure better results in climate economic policy responses of both developed and developing economies.

KEYWORDS: Climate Change, Carbon Pricing, Emissions Trading Systems, Climate Finance, Economic Policy, Adaptation

1. INTRODUCTION

Climate change has been subjected to the idea of human survival, the globe economizing, natural ecosystems, and the welfare of the human society. Global temperature has enhanced, and human-caused emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) have caused even more frequent and extreme weather patterns, including droughts, hurricanes, floods, and wildfires (IPCC, 2021). The economic burden of the events is large, as it inflates the sphere of agriculture, infrastructures, productivity of labour, and human health. The World Bank (2022) projects that over 130 million people will fall into poverty by 2030 unless pathbreaking mitigation and adaptation interventions take place. With the physical consequences of climate change becoming more and more apparent, it is becoming even more economically important to maintain a strong policy initiative.

The general development of climate change economic policy response in the world has gone through a major development within the past few decades, evolving the informal, decentralized method of

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responding to an organized and coordinated process. Multilateral instruments like the Kyoto Protocol (1997) and Paris Agreement (2015) have played an important role of motivating countries to set emission reduction goals and establish climate action strategies. Nevertheless, the rate of adoption of policy has been incredibly different among regions, and on many occasions according to the disparity of economic ability, institutional preparedness, and political determination (Aklin & Urpelainen, 2014).

Carbon pricing, green taxation, cap-and-trade and climate finance functions are taking centre stage as tools in the policy armoury in combating climate change. These instruments are supposed to internalize the price of social expense of carbon emissions and change the production and consumption tendencies to more sustainable course actions (Stiglitz et al., 2017). Individually, examples of such pricing include carbon taxes or emissions that have been implemented in over 70 jurisdictions globally, with nearly 23 percent of the world emissions currently covered (World Bank, 2023). Although these are commendable measures they have several shortcomings such as low carbon prices, fragmentation in policy coordination and non-coordination at a global level.

Complementary to the mitigation policies is the climate adaptation policies whose popularity has been witnessed especially in the developing economies which are vulnerable. Redundant infrastructure, climate smart agriculture, early warning, insurance plans have turned into essential elements of national economic planning. According to the estimates provided by the Global Commission on Adaptation (2019), each dollar spent on adapting to climate change can result in up to seven dollars of economic value, which indicates the great returns of pre-emptive climate resilience approaches.

The international bodies including United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank play an important role in developing the global policy response. Such bodies enhance funding, technical assistance, and coordination of policies and especially in case of low- and middle-income countries that are disproportionately affected by the consequences of climate change but emit the tiniest emissions (UNEP, 2021).

The international economic response to climate change is experiencing many challenges notwithstanding the increased momentum. Some of them are political economy dependency on fossil fuels, unfairness in distributing climate finance, lack of efficient enforcement procedures in global agreements, and possibility of excessive carbon leakage in international trade. Furthermore, climate mitigation efforts have been facing additional threats to success as the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions displace the focus and resources.

The aim of this review paper therefore is to synthesize the existing literature pertaining to the economic policy responses to climate change, and evaluate them in terms of their design, effectiveness and implementation in various countries and regions. It also aims at identifying the best practices, points out weaknesses in present practices, and gives policy recommendations on how to improve the response of the world economy to the climate crisis. With contributions made by fields of economics, public policy and environmental studies the paper will add to a altogether improved comprehension of how countries can design effective and fair national plans to cope with climate change in the 21st century.

2. Carbon Pricing: Taxes Versus Emissions Trading Systems

Carbon pricing is generally seen as a strong and cost-effective option to reduce the emission of greenhouse gasses (Stiglitz et al., 2017). There are two main forms (carbon taxes and emissions-trading systems (ETS)) which are widely represented in the literature.

2.1.1 Carbon Taxes

The academic justification behind carbon taxes is the Pigouvian models of social cost of carbon (Metcalf, 2021). Practically, the revenue-neutral carbon tax in British Columbia has performed so that there is a 17 percent decrease in per capita consumption of fossil fuel that has not affected economic growth negatively (Elgie & Beaty, 2013; BC Ministry of Environment, 2013). According to a broader meta-analysis, carbon taxes are also associated with a consistent decline in the CO2 emissions and a limited impact on GDP (Ahmad et al., 2024); Also, studies conclude that income taxes will cause minor jobs growth as far as efficiency of fuels is increased (Pearce, 2013; [Antonia Grunewald at the World Bank, 2013]; Nonetheless, the distributional consequences are different; there are indications that carbon taxes can be progressive in low-income states, but regressive in high-income ones (Coady et al., 2017;

2.1.2 Emissions-Trading Systems (ETS)

ETS schemes involve limitation in the total emission, in addition to the liberty to trade on the allowance by firms, offering both certainty and market over compliance. Although carbon prices were initially low in the EU ETS, it has been shown that GDP and employment related costs have been minimal, resulting in huge emission reductions (~810%) in the period 2005 2012 (European Commission,). In China, ETS pilots have demonstrated their prospect of alleviating emissions of CO 2 by nearly 1.7 percent relative to the increment of the dollar to the carbon price and promoting economic development (Wu, Qiu, & Guo, 2023;). Such results confirm the feasibility of ETS, especially, due to coverage and permit allocation being well-designed (Ahmad et al., 2024; 2024;).

2.1.3 Comparative Efficacy

Meta-analyses show that carbon tax does better at reducing carbon emissions than ETS but ETS has been shown to be more accommodative to sector specific flexibility (Ahmad et al., 2024;). The performance of hybrid systems is much better (as witnessed in computable general equilibrium (CGE) modelling of China (Wang et al., 2025;).

2.2 Economic Growth, Macroeconomic Impacts, and Social Costs

In the past, the carbon pricing regimes have managed to curb emissions without much impact on the economic growth or jobs. To give a further example, in Indonesia, a fuel tax achieved the same result of raising GDP by 0.29% at a level of GDP below 2030, and carbon taxes and ETS had similarly slight effects on GDP (declines of -0.11 and -0.11%, respectively) but met their emission reduction goals (Thompson et al., 2020). Carbon taxes are threatening the livelihoods of millions of adults and children everywhere, yet universal meta-analyses of climatic policy effects report that carbon taxes have little or no impact on GDP (Zhang et al., 2023).

Integrated assessment models (IAMs) perform calculations to soon estimate social cost of carbon (SCC) to help in policy design. Referring to their studies, Cai, Judd, and Lontzek (2015) proved that incorporation of the risk of both the economy and climate could lead to a tenfold increase in the estimates of SCC, which is why precautionary policy making is vital. Remarks by economists on carbon dividends endorse disclosure and fair distribution of carbon prices with the income being paid back to families (Climate Leadership Council, 2019). However, policy credibility may suffer due to politically caused SCC uncertainty such as the policy alternation in the U.S. (EPA, 2023;).

2.3 Technological Change and Innovation

An expanding literature of ex-post studies associates carbon prices with high-carbon low-carbon and energy efficiency advancement. Lilliestam (2021) reviews the examples of countries around the globe, including those of British Columbia, EU, and New Zealand, where clean technologies are being adopted quicker in places where carbon price is above low levels. Increase carbon prices also provide incentives to innovation, foreign investment and energy mix change particularly amongst ETS covered companies (Wu et al., 2023).

Preliminary evidence in China has indicated that collaborative ETS-and-tax mechanisms lead to greater innovation in the cleaner sectors, which indicates that hybrid policy modelling can provide the best policy incentives to decarbonize (Wang et al., 2025;).

2.4 Equity, Distributional Impacts, and Political Acceptability

The issue of equity is the centre of climate policy. Meta-analysis indicates that carbon pricing in the developing economies has the characteristic of being progressive but can severely impact the low-income households in the rich countries, unless the revenue recycling is broadly targeted (Coady et al., 2017). Moreover, this Potsdam Institute points at the fact that the effectiveness of policies in tackling climate often depends on social justice measures that should be consistent with social acceptance (FT, 2024).

To alleviate the carbon leakage effects and balance competitive gaps, the idea of border carbon adjustments and climate clubs has been brought out. Nevertheless, the tools have concerns of fairness, adherence to the trade law, and administrative complexity, particularly to the developing countries (FT, 2025).

2.5 Climate Finance and Adaptation Economics

The investments in adaptation are also significant when adaptation is compared to mitigation since there is a significant payoff. GCA put the resilience-building cost at a dollar and estimated a 7-dollar payback to each dollar invested in these measures (GCA, 2019). However, empirical summaries of current climate finance allocations around the globe indicate a continuation of underfunding adaptation in comparison to mitigation and with the prevailing skew on the developing world (Kumar et al., 2023).

3. METHODOLOGY

The qualitative and analytical research design applied in this paper is based on secondary data analysis about the study of the climate change economic policy responses by different regions in different global contexts. It is based on the narrative literature review, i.e., the method will be used to synthesize the results of peer-reviewed journals, working papers, institutional reports, and meta-analyses published over the past 4 years (since 2000 until 2024). This review is concentration on the manner in which various nations and organizations have formulated and enacted the economic policies- the carbon pricing, the schemes of emissions trading implementations, and the climate finance systems, to address the jolt of global climate change.

Academic databases used to collect the literature included Google scholar, JSTOR, Scopus, science direct, springer link and EBSCOhost generic databases; institutional sources included the World Bank, IMF, IPCC, UNEP, OECD and the climate policy initiative. Searches were done using the following keywords: climate change economic policy, carbon pricing effectiveness, emissions trading systems, green taxation, climate finance, adaptation economics, economic impact of climate change mitigation. Literature inclusion criteria included: (1) both peer-reviewed journals and reputable institutional publications; (2) the reference to main research issues of climate change and economic policy-making.

Peer-reviewed research articles and policy reports were chosen on the basis of theme, quality of citation, and empirical strength. The sample studies were reviewed in order to identify key trends, policy outcomes, degree of effectiveness and shared issues in various countries and policy frameworks. Cross- country comparison was also used to determine the best practices as well as barriers to implementation in different regions.

Thematic organization: The review consists of six broad dimensions of climate-related economic policy, (1) carbon pricing mechanisms, (2) macroeconomic effects and growth implications, (3) innovation and technological transitions, (4) equity and distributional outcomes, (5) climate finance and adaptation policy, and the 6) political economy and international cooperation. The limitations of

this research methodology are the inability to use any non-English sources, the possibility of choosing biased literature source, and no primary studies or field data interviewing.
The overall purpose of this qualitative synthesis is to give a full picture of the strengths and limitations of the global economic policy reactions towards climate change including new trends towards the topic; therefore, to present evidence-based basis of future researches and policymaking.

4. DISCUSSION

The overview of climate policy of the economies in the world shows that there is a complicated, developing and usually fragmented reaction to a challenge of an unprecedented magnitude. Although climate change and its impacts are scientifically determined (IPCC, 2021), the differences in the responses of the same across regions reveal that the political willingness, institutional preparedness and the socio-economic capabilities among countries are uneven.

Among key lessons learned is that not only is there a burgeoning agreement on the efficacy of carbon pricing mechanisms, such as carbon taxes and emissions trading systems (ETS), as a cost-effective means of greenhouse gas emissions reduction, but also there is strong agreement that such a pricing mechanism should serve as the foundation of a comprehensive carbon pricing policy. The experience of both developed and emerging economies shows that with adequate implementation, a carbon price can cause a decline in carbon emissions without a significant adverse effect on economic growth (Metcalf, 2021; Wu et al., 2023). The ETS in the European Union has most especially shown success in de-linking emissions and growth of the GDP, whereas British Columbia and Swedish countries have proven that the implementation of carbon taxes was not an obstacle to its competitiveness. Nevertheless, carbon prices in the world market are low and significantly below the carbon price that could reach the goals provided in the Paris Agreements (Stiglitz et al., 2017), as the governments have not introduced it due to political unwillingness, the pressure of industries with high carbon emissions, and budget and political concerns of the population.

The other important theme that also comes out of the literature is the issue of innovation and technological change. Climate policies that are based on markets, at least when they are combined with governmental support of R&D, have been demonstrated to promote innovation in low-carbon technologies, whether renewable energy and electric cars, carbon capture and storage. In line with this, multiple studies note that one of the market clear signals requiring the investment into green technologies on the part of the private sector lies in the availability of predictable and adequately high carbon prices (Lilliestam et al., 2021). Nonetheless, decarbonization through innovation also requires complementary infrastructure, institutional coordination, and long-term stability in the policies that are often unavailable in many low and middle-income countries.

Effectiveness of carbon pricing modes (such as the carbon taxes and emissions trading systems (ETS)) as cost-effective means of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions. Experience in both developed and emergent economies suggests that carbon pricing may be able to achieve emission reduction with modest cost toward economic growth, particularly with a well-formulated structure (Metcalf, 2021; Wu et al., 2023). The ETS in particular has been good with the European Union to decouple emission and increase in GDP, and the case of other regions such as British Columbia and Sweden shows that it is viable to introduce carbon tax without it necessarily slowing down the competitiveness. But the prices on global carbon are by far too low to meet the Paris Agreement targets, which can be explained by political opposition, pressure on the governments by carbon-intensive industries, and popular worries about increasing the prices (Stiglitz et al., 2017).

Funding on the climate adaptation and mitigation especially in the vulnerable developing economies is a key snag. Although global commitments, like the $100 billion commitment per year made by the

developed nations, are a move in the right direction, the climate financing is below its targets, and a tremendous amount is spent on mitigation and not adaptation (UNEP, 2021). The review emphasizes the economic motive behind the growth of adaptation finance: investment in resilient infrastructure, early warning systems; sustainable farming brings high-economic payoffs and lowers the vulnerability in the long run (GCA, 2019). In addition, the literature identifies the necessity of mechanisms of climate finance, which will be accessible, transparent, and responsive to the interests of the local communities.

The international collaboration, which is the focus of the Paris Agreement and is strengthened by the IMF, the World Bank, and the UNFCCC, is also instrumental to facilitating climate action. Nonetheless, weak governance, diffusion of policy regimes and lack of enforcing measures have curtailed improvement. It is suggested to address free-riding and competitive issues by using border carbon adjustments, climate clubs, and green trade agreements to mitigate them, but they present legal and geopolitical issues (Rodrik, 2020).

On the whole, the international economic policy reaction to climate change is headed in the right direction but with an inappropriate pace and amount that is still not adequate to address the intensity of the climate crisis. An appraisal of the evidence indicates that a combination of powerful carbon pricing, tailored investments in the public sector, innovation rewards, and universal social policies can bring fair and effective climatic results. To realize this, the policy of climate planning should not occur in environmental designs alone but should be applied within the platform of mainstream economic and fiscal planning, as well as design. Other issues, such as more political commitment, popular participation, and international solidarity, are necessary to speed up the changing over to low-carbon and climate-resilient world economy.

5. Conclusion

Climate change has been posed as the greatest challenge of the 21st century with widespread implications to the ecosystem, society, and the economy. Its review paper discussed how different economies react to climate change in diverse world perspectives and how this issue is approached through carbon pricing systems, innovation budgets, equity affairs, and climate finance. The literature review has ensured that properly formulated economic policies especially use of carbon taxes, emissions trading system (ETS) and hybrids can considerably curb emission of greenhouse gases without seriously impairing economic performance and employment opportunities. Nevertheless, the general efficiency of these policies is largely preconditioned by their breadth, construction, regulations and acceptance of people.

Besides, climate change should not only focus on mitigation measures, but it should also consider a strong adaption policy, particularly among the developing economies that are at a disadvantaged position. Long-term fat returns are very high when it comes to the adaptation investment, but the flow of international climate finance is inadequate and skewed towards mitigation. Inequalities in the availability to climate finance, the absence of a compliance regime at the international treaties level, and the socio-political costs of resisting climate taxation are yet not overcome. Excitingly, studies point out that redistribution of carbon revenues and the nurture of green innovation will ameliorate not only the effectiveness but also the social acceptability of policies. Finally, climate action needs to be integrated into national development policies and international collaboration, advance in technology, and inclusiveness of policymaking.

6. Recommendations

I. **Strengthen Carbon Pricing Mechanisms:** Carbon taxes and emissions trading systems are policies that, if adopted or re-enforced by policymakers, must have sufficient levels of price and

extensive coverage on the sectoral basis. The hybrid strategies which incorporate carbon taxes and cap-and-trade mechanisms can be more flexible and efficient.

II. **Ensure Equity and Revenue Recycling**: Recycling carbon revenues by direct compensation, energy subsidies, or social facilities investments can alleviate the risks of unequal imposition of burden on low-income families. A political and social legitimacy imposes equity-based design.

III. **Enhance Public Investment in Innovation and Green Infrastructure**: Governments need to spend in clean energy research and development, transport infrastructure, energy-efficient construction and natural-based solutions. These investments are able to provide a boost to the creation of green jobs as well as the pace of low-carbon transitions.

IV. **Expand Climate Adaptation Finance and Capacity Building**: Developed countries and multilateral institutions need to deliver and surpass the promises of climate finance to aid adaptation in the developing countries. It is essential to simplify the access to climate funding as well as facilitating local-level climate resilience.

V. **Institutionalize Climate Policy in National Economic Planning**: Climate policy is not supposed to work on a standalone basis but it is supposed to be incorporated in fiscal, industrial and employment policies. Economic development must be placed in line with climate objectives and this calls for cross-sectoral coordination.

VI. **Foster Global Cooperation and Policy Harmonization**: International coordination is the best method of responding to global issues such as carbon leakage, green trade policies and border carbon adjustments. Collective outcomes can be improved through climate clubs and common platforms of technology.

VII. **Promote Public Engagement and Climate Literacy**: Climate action must have the support of people. Public trust can be achieved through education drives, participatory politics, and open communication, which prevents and stops the spread of information regarding climate policy costs and benefits.

VIII. **Monitor, Evaluate, and Adjust Policies Based on Evidence**: Institutions and governments ought to invest in strong monitoring and evaluation systems to determine effectiveness of climate policies. Adaptive policymaking that is empirically based guarantees that there is a continuous improvement.

7. Challenges And Emerging Research Directions

The challenges that remain are low carbon price signals on the world scale, lack of consistency when it comes to policy architecture and being susceptible to unintentional consequences. The newspaper Le Monde notes that only a small part of global climate policy achieves what it set out to do: a reduction in emissions- and this is the reason why coherent sets of complements are needed (FT, 2024). The frequent failures are the fraud during the biofuel subsidies and the faulty taxation system that supports fossil fuel (FT, 2025).

The areas of research gaps can be identified as the nature of long-term economic feedbacks and dynamic effects of hybrid systems, the models of adaptation financing, and combining nature-based climate solutions and technological mitigation (FT, 2025). There still is some need to continue econometric analysis, CGE modelling, and sector targeted case studies in economic policy designing.

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